

# JUDGES.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE Book of Judges, like the other Historical Books of the Old Testament, takes its name from the subject to which it chiefly relates, viz., the exploits of those JUDGES<sup>1</sup> who ruled Israel in the times between the death of Joshua and the rise of Samuel. The rule of the Judges (Ruth i. 1) in this limited sense was a distinct Dispensation, distinct from the leadership of Moses and Joshua, distinct from the more regular supremacy of Eli, the High-Priest, and from the Prophetic Dispensation inaugurated by Samuel (1 Sam. iii. 19-21; Acts iii. 24).

The book consists of three divisions. (1) The PREFACE, which extends to iii. 6 (incl.). (2) The MAIN NARRATIVE, iii. 7-xvi. 31. (3) THE APPENDIX, containing two detached narratives, (a) xvii.; (b) xviii.-xxi. To these may be added the Book of Ruth, containing another detached narrative, which anciently was included under the title of JUDGES, to which book the first verse shows that it properly belongs.

(1) The general purpose of the Preface is to prepare the ground for the subsequent narrative; to explain how it was that the heathen nations of Canaan were still

so powerful, and the Israelites so destitute of Divine aid and protection against their enemies; and to draw out the striking lessons of God's righteous judgment, which were afforded by the alternate servitudes and deliverances of the Israelites, according as they either forsook God to worship idols, or returned to Him in penitence, faith, and prayer. Throughout there is a reference to the threatenings and promises of the Books of Moses (ii. 15, 20, &c.), in order both to vindicate the power and faithfulness of Jehovah the God of Israel, and to hold out a warning to the future generations for whose instruction the Book was written. In the view which the writer was inspired to present to the Church, never was God's agency more busy in relation to the affairs of His people, than when, to a superficial observer, that agency had altogether ceased. On the other hand, the writer calls attention to the fact that those heroes, who wrought such wonderful deliverances for Israel, did it not by their own power, but were divinely commissioned, and divinely endowed with courage, strength, and victory. The writer of the Preface also directs the minds of the readers of his history to that vital doctrine, which it was one main object of the Old Testament Dispensation to keep alive in the world till the coming of Christ, viz., the Unity of God. All the calamiti-

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<sup>1</sup> The Phœnician and Carthaginian *Suffete*, mentioned by Livy as corresponding in office to the Roman Consuls, is the same word as the Hebrew *Shophet*, Judge.

ties which he was about to narrate, were the fruit and consequence of idolatry. "Keep yourselves from idols," was the chief lesson which the history of the Judges was intended to inculcate.

The Preface consists of two very different portions; the recapitulation of events before, and up to, Joshua's death (i.-ii. 9), and the reflections on the history about to be related (ii. 10-iii. 6).

(2) THE MAIN NARRATIVE contains, not consecutive annals of Israel as a united people, but a series of brilliant, striking, pictures, now of one portion of the tribes, now of another. Of some epochs minute details are given; other periods of eight or ten years, nay, even of twenty, forty, or eighty years, are disposed of in four or five words. Obviously in those histories in which we find graphic touches and accurate details, we have preserved to us narratives contemporary with the events narrated—the narratives, probably, of eye-witnesses and actors in the events themselves. The histories of Ehud, of Barak and Deborah, of Gideon, of Jephthah, and of Samson, are the product of times when the invasions of Moab, of Jabin, of Midian, of Ammon, and of the Philistines, were living realities in the minds of those who penned those histories. The compiler of the Book seems to have inserted bodily in his history the ancient narratives which were extant in his day. As the mind of the reader is led on by successive steps to the various exploits of the twelve Judges, and from them to Samuel, and from Samuel to David, and from David to David's son, it cannot fail to recognize the working of one Divine plan for

man's redemption, and to understand how Judges, and Prophets, and Kings were endowed with some portion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, preparatory to the coming into the world of Him in Whom all the fulness of the Godhead should dwell bodily, and Who should save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him.

Some curious analogies have been noted between this, the heroic age of the Israelites, and the heroic ages of Greece and other Gentile countries. Here, as there, it is in the early settlement and taking possession of their new country, and in conflicts with the old races, that the virtues and prowess of the heroes are developed. Here, as there, there is oftentimes a strange mixture of virtue and vice, a blending of great and noble qualities, of most splendid deeds with cruelty and ignorance, licentiousness and barbarism. And yet, in comparing the sacred with the heathen heroes, we find in the former a faith in God and a religious purpose, of which Heathendom affords no trace. The exploits of the sacred heroes advanced the highest interests of mankind, and were made subservient to the overthrow of abominable and impure superstitions, and to the preserving a light of true religion in the world until the coming of Christ.

(3) THE APPENDIX contains a record of certain events which happened "in the days when the judges ruled," but are not connected with any exploits of the Judges. Though placed at the end of the book, the two histories both manifestly belong chronologically to the beginning of it: the reason for

the place selected is perhaps that suggested in xvii. 1 note.

Exact chronology forms no part of the plan of the book. The only guide to the chronology is to be found in the genealogies which span the period: and the evidence of these genealogies concurs in assigning an average of between seven and eight generations to the time from the entrance into Canaan to the commencement of David's reign, which would make up from 240 to 260 years. Deducting 30 years for Joshua, 30 for Samuel, and 40 for the reign of Saul (Acts xiii. 21), in all 100 years, we have from 140 to 160 years left for the events related in the Book of Judges. This is a short time, no doubt, but quite sufficient, when it is remembered that many of the *rests* and *servitudes* (iii. 8 note) therein related are not successive, but synchronize; and that no great dependence can be placed on the recurring 80, 40, and 20 years, whenever they are not in harmony with historical probability.

The narratives which have the strongest appearance of synchronizing are those of the Moabite, Ammonite, and Amalekite servitude (iii. 12-30) which lasted *eighteen* years, and was closely connected with a Philistine invasion (iii. 31); of the Ammonite servitude which lasted *eighteen* years, and was also closely connected with a Philistine invasion (x. 7, 8); and of the Midianite and Amalekite servitude which lasted seven years (vi. 1), all three of which terminated in a complete expulsion and destruction of their enemies by the three leaders Ehud, Jephthah, and Gideon, heading respectively the Benjamites, the Manassites and the northern tribes, and the tribes be-

yond Jordan: the conduct of the Ephraimites as related in ch. viii. 1, xii. 1, being an additional very strong feature of resemblance in the two histories of Gideon and Jephthah. The 40 years of Philistine servitude mentioned in Judg. xiii. 1, seems to have embraced the last 20 years of Eli's judgeship, and the first 20 of Samuel's, and terminated with Samuel's victory at Eben-ezer: and, if so, Samson's judgeship of 20 years also coincided in part with Samuel's. The long *rests* of 40 and 80 years spoken of as following the victories of Othniel, Barak, and Ehud, may very probably have synchronized in whole or in part. It cannot however be denied that the chronology of this book is still a matter of uncertainty.

The time of the compilation of this Book, and the *final* arrangement of its component parts in their present form and in their present connexion in the series of the Historical Books of Scripture, may with most probability be assigned to the latter times of the Jewish monarchy, included in the same plan. (The Book of Ezra, it may be observed, by the way, is a continuation, not of Kings, but of Chronicles.) There is not the slightest allusion in the Book of Judges, to the Babylonish captivity. Only Judges iii. 5, 6, as regards the Canaanite races mentioned, and the context, may be compared with Ezra ix. 1, 2. The language of the Book of Judges points to the same conclusion. It is pure and good Hebrew, untainted with Chaldaisms or Persian forms, as are the later books.

The inference to which these and other such resemblances *tend*, is that the compilation of the

Book of Judges is of about the same age as that of the Books of Samuel and Kings, if not actually the work of the same hand. But no absolute certainty can be arrived at.

The chief allusions to it in the New Testament are those in Heb. xi. 32 seq., and Acts xiii. 20. But there are frequent references to the histories contained in it in the Psalms and in the Prophets. See

Psalms lxxviii. 56, &c., lxxxiii. 9-11, cvi. 34-45, &c.; Isaiah ix. 4, x. 26; Nehem. ix. 27, &c. See also 1 Sam. xii. 9-11; 2 Sam. xi. 21. Other Books to which it refers are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. See marg. reff. to i. ii. 1-3, 6-10, 15, 20-23, iv. 11, vi. 8, 13, x. 11, xi. 13-26, xiii. 5, xvi. 17, xviii. 30, xix. 23, 24, xx. 26, 27, &c.

# THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

**CHAP. 1.** NOW after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel <sup>a</sup>asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the LORD said, <sup>b</sup>Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. ¶ And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and <sup>c</sup>I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in <sup>d</sup>Bezek ten thousand men. And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs, and his great toes. And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having <sup>e</sup>their thumbs and their great toes cut off, <sup>f</sup>gathered *their meat* under my table: <sup>g</sup>as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died. ¶ Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it

<sup>a</sup> Num. 27.  
<sup>b</sup> 21.  
<sup>c</sup> ch. 20. 18.  
<sup>d</sup> Gen. 49. 9.

<sup>e</sup> ver. 17.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Sam. 11.  
<sup>g</sup> 8.

<sup>h</sup> Lev. 24. 10.  
<sup>i</sup> 1 Sam. 15. 33.  
<sup>j</sup> Jam. 2. 13.  
<sup>k</sup> / See Josh. 15. 63.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *the thumbs of their hands and of their feet.*

<sup>2</sup> Or, *gleaned.*

I. 1. *after the death of Joshua*] But from i. 1 to ii. 9 is a consecutive narrative, ending with the death of Joshua. Hence the events in this chapter and in ii. 1-6 are to be taken as belonging to the lifetime of Joshua. See ii. 11 note.

*asked the LORD*] The phrase is only found in *Judges* and *Samuel*. It was the privilege of the civil ruler, to apply to the High Priest to consult for him the Urim and Thummim (marg. ref.). (Cp. Josh. xiv. 1, xviii. 1, 10, xix. 51). Here it was not Phinehas, as Josephus concludes from placing these events after the death of Joshua, but Eleazar, through whom the children of Israel inquired "Who," (or, rather) "*which tribe of us shall go up*."

2. *And the LORD said*] i.e. answered by Urim and Thummim. *The land* was the portion which fell to Judah by lot, not the whole land of Canaan (see iii. 11). The priority given to Judah is a plain indication of Divine direction. It points to the birth of our Lord of the tribe of Judah. Judah associated Simeon with him (v. 3) because their lots were intermingled (Josh. xix. 1).

4. *the Canaanites and the Perizzites*] See Gen. xii. 6, xiii. 7 notes. *Bezek* may be the name of a district. It has not yet been identified.

7. *threescore and ten kings*] We may infer from this number of conquered kings, that the intestine wars of the Canaanites were

among the causes which, under God's Providence, weakened their resistance to the Israelites. Adoni-Bezek's cruelty to the subject kings was the cause of his receiving (cp. marg. ref.) this chastisement. The loss of the thumb would unfit a man for handling sword or bow; the loss of the great toe would impede his speed.

8. Render "*and the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem, and took it, and smote it,*" &c. With regard to the capture of Jerusalem there is some obscurity. It is here said to have been taken, smitten with the edge of the sword, and burnt, by the children of Judah. In Josh. xii. 8, 10 the Jebusite and the king of Jerusalem are enumerated among Joshua's conquests, but without any distinct mention of the capture of the city; and in the marg. ref. we read that the Jebusites were not expelled from Jerusalem, but dwelt with the children of Judah (cp. i. 21). Further we learn from xix. 10-12 that Jerusalem was wholly a Jebusite city in the lifetime of Phinehas (xx. 28), and so it continued till the reign of David (2 Sam. v. 6-9). The conclusion is that Jerusalem was only taken once, viz. at the time here described, and that this was in the lifetime of Joshua; but that the children of Judah did not occupy it in sufficient force to prevent the return of the Jebusites, who gradually recovered complete possession.

- <sup>o</sup> Josh. 10. 30.  
 & 11. 21.  
 & 15. 13.  
<sup>a</sup> Josh. 14. 15.  
 & 15. 14.  
<sup>i</sup> Josh. 15. 15.  
<sup>k</sup> Josh. 15. 16, 17.  
<sup>j</sup> ch. 3. 9.  
<sup>m</sup> Josh. 15. 18, 19.  
<sup>n</sup> Gen. 33. 11.  
<sup>o</sup> ch. 4. 11.  
<sup>l</sup> Sam. 15. 6.  
<sup>1</sup> Chr. 2. 55.  
<sup>p</sup> Jer. 35. 2.  
<sup>p</sup> Deut. 34. 3.  
<sup>q</sup> Num. 21. 1.  
<sup>r</sup> Num. 10. 32.  
<sup>q</sup> ver. 3.  
<sup>i</sup> Josh. 10. 4.  
<sup>j</sup> Josh. 11. 22.  
<sup>r</sup> ver. 2.  
<sup>v</sup> Josh. 17. 16, 18.  
<sup>s</sup> Num. 14. 24.  
<sup>t</sup> See Josh. 18. 23.  
<sup>b</sup> ver. 10.  
<sup>c</sup> Josh. 2. 1.  
 & 7. 2.  
<sup>d</sup> Gen. 28. 10.
- 9 with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire. <sup>o</sup> And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the <sup>1</sup>valley. And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before was <sup>a</sup>Kirjath-arba:) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai. <sup>i</sup> And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sopher: <sup>k</sup>And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sopher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, <sup>j</sup>Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. <sup>m</sup>And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off *her ass*; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? And she said unto him, "Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs. <sup>q</sup>And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law, went up out <sup>r</sup>of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which *lieth* in the south of <sup>q</sup>Arad; <sup>r</sup>and they went and dwelt among the people. <sup>s</sup>And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called <sup>t</sup>Hormah. Also Judah took <sup>u</sup>Gaza with the coast thereof, and Askelon with the coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof. And <sup>v</sup>the LORD was with Judah; and <sup>w</sup>he drave out *the inhabitants* of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had <sup>x</sup>chariots of iron. <sup>y</sup>And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak. <sup>z</sup>And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day. <sup>aa</sup>And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Beth-el: <sup>ab</sup>and the LORD was with them. And the house of Joseph <sup>ac</sup>sent to decry Beth-el. (Now the name of the city before was <sup>ad</sup>Luz.) And the spies

<sup>1</sup> Or, low country.

<sup>a</sup> Or, he possessed the mountain.

*set the city on fire*] A phrase found only at xx. 48; 2 K. viii. 12, and Ps. lxxiv. 7.

16. *the children of the Kenite*] See Num. xxiv. 21 note.

*the city of palm trees*] Jericho (see marg. ref.). The Rabbinical story is that Jericho, with 500 cubits square of land, was given to Hobab. The use of the phrase "city of palm trees" for "Jericho," is perhaps an indication of the influence of Joshua's curse (Josh. vi. 26). The very name of Jericho was blotted out. There are no palm trees at Jericho now, but Josephus mentions them repeatedly, as well as the balsam trees.

17. *Hormah*] See Num. xxi. 1 note. The destruction then vowed was now accomplished. This is another decisive indication that the events here related belong to Joshua's lifetime. This would be about six years after the vow.

18. It is remarkable that *Ashdod* is not here mentioned, as it is in Josh. xv. 46, 47,

in conjunction with Gaza and Ekron; but that Askelon, which is not in the list of the cities of Judah at all, is named in its stead. (See Josh. xiii. 3 note.) It is a curious fact that when Rameses III. took Askelon it was occupied, not by Philistines, but apparently by Hebrews. Rameses began to reign B.C. 1269, and reigned 25 years. At any time between 1269 and 1244 such occupation of Askelon by Hebrews agrees with the Book of Judges.

21. This verse is nearly identical with Josh. xv. 63, except in the substitution of *Benjamin for Judah*. Probably the original reading *Judah* was altered in later times to *Benjamin*, because Jebus was within the border of Benjamin, and neither had the Benjamites expelled the Jebusites.

22. Bethel was within the borders of Benjamin, but was captured, as we here learn, by the house of Joseph, who probably retained it.

- saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and <sup>c</sup>we will show thee mercy. And when he shewed them the entrance into the city, they smote the city with the edge of the sword; but they let go the man and all his family. And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which <sup>c</sup>is the name thereof unto this day.
- ¶ Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out. ¶ Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. ¶ Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the <sup>k</sup>inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries.
- ¶ Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Aklab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: but the Asherites <sup>k</sup>dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out. ¶ Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he <sup>m</sup>dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath <sup>n</sup>became tributaries unto them. ¶ And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: but the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres <sup>o</sup>in Aijalon, and in Shaalbin: yet the hand of the house of Joseph <sup>p</sup>prevailed, so that they became tributaries. And the coast of the Amorites <sup>p</sup>was <sup>q</sup>from <sup>q</sup>the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.
- CHAP. 2.** And an <sup>a</sup>angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal <sup>a</sup>to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have

<sup>c</sup> Josh. 2. 12, 14.

<sup>f</sup> Josh. 17. 11, 12, 13.

<sup>g</sup> Josh. 10. 10.  
<sup>1</sup> Kin. 9. 10.

<sup>h</sup> Josh. 10. 15.

<sup>i</sup> Josh. 10. 21-30.

<sup>k</sup> Ps. 106. 34, 35.

<sup>l</sup> Josh. 10. 38.

<sup>m</sup> ver. 22.

<sup>n</sup> ver. 30.

<sup>o</sup> Josh. 10. 42.

<sup>p</sup> Num. 31. 4.  
Josh. 15. 3.

<sup>a</sup> ver. 5.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *was heavy*.

<sup>2</sup> Or, *Maaleh-akrabbim*.

<sup>3</sup> Or, *messenger*.

26. The site of this new Luz is not known, but "the land of the Hittites" was apparently in the north of Palestine, on the borders of Syria (Gen. x. 15 note).

31. Cp. marg. ref. *Accho*, afterwards called Ptolemais, now Akko or St. Jean d'Acre, is named here for the first time.

32. It is an evidence of the power of the Canaanite in this portion of the land that it is not said (cp. v. 30) that the Canaanites dwelt among the Asherites, but that the Asherites (and v. 33, Naphtali) "dwelt among the Canaanites;" nor are the Canaanites in Accho, Zidon, and the other Asherite cities, said to have become tributaries.

34. The Amorites are usually found in the mountain (Num. xiii. 29; Josh. x. 6). Here they dwell in the valley, of which the monuments of Rameses III. show them to have been in possession when that monarch invaded Syria. It was their great strength in this district, and their forcible detention

of the territory of Dan, which led to the expedition of the Danites (xviii.). The house of Joseph lent their powerful aid in subduing them, probably in the times of the Judges.

36. *the going up to Akrabbim*] See marg. and ref.; properly "the ascent of scorpions," with which the whole region abounds. *the rock*] *Petra*, the capital of Idumea, so called from the mass of precipitous rock which encloses the town, and out of which many of its buildings are excavated. The original word *Selah* is always used of the rock at Kadesh-Barnea (Num. xx. 8-11), near Petra (cp. Obad. 3). This leads us to look for "the ascent of scorpions," here coupled with *has-selah*, in the same neighbourhood.

II. 1. *The angel of the LORD* (not an angel).] The phrase is used nearly sixty times to designate the Angel of God's Presence. See Gen. xii. 7 note. In all cases where "the angel of the Lord" delivers a message,

<sup>b</sup> Gen. 17. 7.  
<sup>c</sup> Ex. 3. 6-8.  
<sup>d</sup> Deut. 7. 2.  
<sup>e</sup> Deut. 12. 3.  
<sup>f</sup> ver. 20.

<sup>g</sup> Josh. 23. 13.  
<sup>h</sup> ch. 3. 6.  
<sup>i</sup> Ex. 23. 33.  
<sup>j</sup> 34. 12.  
<sup>k</sup> Deut. 7. 16.

<sup>l</sup> Josh. 22. 6.  
<sup>m</sup> 24. 23.

<sup>n</sup> Josh. 24. 31.  
<sup>o</sup> Josh. 24. 23.

<sup>p</sup> Josh. 24. 30.

<sup>q</sup> Josh. 10. 50.

<sup>r</sup> 24. 30.  
*Timnath*

*serah.*  
<sup>s</sup> 1 Sam. 2. 12.

<sup>t</sup> 1 Chr. 28. 9.  
<sup>u</sup> Jer. 9. 3.

<sup>v</sup> Gal. 4. 8.  
<sup>w</sup> 2 Thess. 1. 8.

<sup>x</sup> Tit. 1. 16.

brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; 2 and <sup>b</sup>I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And <sup>c</sup>ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; <sup>d</sup>ye shall throw down their altars: <sup>e</sup>but ye have not obeyed my voice: 3 why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be <sup>f</sup>as thorns in your 4 sides, and <sup>g</sup>their gods shall be a <sup>h</sup>snare unto you. And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their 5 voice, and wept. And they called the name of that place 6 <sup>i</sup>Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD. <sup>j</sup>¶ And when <sup>k</sup>Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went 7 every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. <sup>l</sup>And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that <sup>m</sup>outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great 8 works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. And <sup>n</sup>Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, <sup>o</sup>being an hundred and 9 ten years old. <sup>p</sup>¶ And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in <sup>q</sup>Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the 10 north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which <sup>r</sup>knew not the LORD, nor yet the works

<sup>1</sup> That is, *Weepers*.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *prolonged days after Joshua*.

he does it as if God Himself were speaking, without the intervening words "*Thus saith the Lord*," which are used in the case of prophets. (Cp. vi. 8; Josh. xxiv. 2.)

When the host of Israel came up from Gilgal in the plain of Jericho, near the Jordan (Josh. iv. 19) to Shiloh and Shechem, in the hill country of Ephraim, the Angel who had been with them at Gilgal (Exod. xxiii. 20-23, xxxiii. 1-4; Josh. v. 10-15) accompanied them. The mention of Gilgal thus fixes the transaction to the period soon after the removal of the camp from Gilgal, and the events recorded in i. 1-36 (of which those related in vv. 1-29 took place before, and those in vv. 30-36, just after that removal). It also shows that it was the conduct of the Israelites, recorded in ch. i. as in Josh. xvi. xvii., which provoked this rebuke.

2. The two articles of the Covenant here specified (cp. marg. ref.) are those which the Israelites had at this time broken. The other important prohibition (Deut. vii. 3) is not specified by the Angel, and this is an indication that at the time the Angel spoke, intermarriages with the heathen spoken of (iii. 6) had not taken place; and this again is another evidence of the early date of this occurrence.

3. "*Wherefore I also said*" [Rather because ye have done the things mentioned in v. 2, "*I have now said* (i.e. I now protest and declare) *that I will not drive them out from before you*" (cp. xix. 29). And it was the announcement of this resolution by the Angel that caused the people to weep.

The word thorns in this verse is supplied

by the A. V. from the similar passage in Joshua (see marg. ref.). Other Versions adopt a different reading of the original text, and prefer the sense "they shall be to you for adversaries" (cp. the last words of Num. xxxiii. 55).

6. *Bochim*] i.e. weepers. It was near Shechem, but the site is unknown. Cp. the names given to places for similar reasons in Gen. xxxv. 8, l. 11.

7. If Joshua was about 80 at the entrance into Canaan, 30 years would bring us to the close of his life. The "elders" would be all that were old enough to take part in the wars of Canaan (iii. 1, 2); and therefore, reckoning from the age of 20 to 70, a period of about 50 years may be assigned from the entrance into Canaan to the death of the elders, or 20 years after the death of Joshua.

*the great works of the LORD*] The overthrow of the Canaanitish nations.

8. *the servant of the LORD*] This is a title specially given to Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 5; Josh. i. 1). In later books, the phrase "the servant of God" is used (1 Chr. vi. 49; Neh. x. 29; Dan. ix. 11; Rev. xv. 3). It is applied to Joshua only here and in Josh. xxiv. 29. It is spoken of David (Ps. xviii., title), and generally of the prophets; and, like the analogous phrase, "man of God," is transferred by St. Paul to the ministers of Christ under the New Testament (2 Tim. ii. 24; Jam. i. 1).

10. *all that generation*] i.e. the main body of those who were grown-up men at the time of the conquest of Canaan.





- <sup>a</sup> Josh. 23. 21 my voice; <sup>a</sup>I also will not henceforth drive out any from before  
 13. 22 them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: <sup>a</sup>that  
<sup>i</sup> ch. 3. 1, 4. through them I may <sup>k</sup>prove Israel, whether they will keep the  
<sup>k</sup> Deut. 8. 2, way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or  
 16. & 13. 3. 23 not. Therefore the LORD <sup>l</sup>left those nations, without driving  
 them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of  
 Joshua.
- <sup>a</sup> ch. 2. 21, **CHAP. 3.** NOW these are <sup>a</sup>the nations which the LORD left, to  
 22. prove Israel by them, *even* as many of Israel as had not known  
 2 all the wars of Canaan; only that the generations of the children  
 of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as  
<sup>b</sup> Josh 13. 3 before knew nothing thereof; *namely*, <sup>b</sup>five lords of the Philis-  
 2-6. tines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites  
 that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto  
<sup>c</sup> ch. 2. 22. 4 the entering in of Hamath. <sup>c</sup>And they were to prove Israel by  
 them, to know whether they would hearken unto the command-  
 ments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the  
<sup>d</sup> Ps. 106. 5 hand of Moses. ¶ <sup>d</sup>And the children of Israel dwelt among the  
 35. Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites,  
<sup>e</sup> Ex. 34. 16. 6 and Jebusites; and <sup>e</sup>they took their daughters to be their wives,  
 Deut. 7. 3. and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.  
<sup>f</sup> ch. 2. 11. 7 <sup>f</sup>And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and  
<sup>g</sup> ch. 2. 13. forgot the LORD their God, <sup>g</sup>and served Baalim and <sup>h</sup>the groves.  
<sup>h</sup> Ex. 34. 13. 8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he  
<sup>i</sup> ch. 6. 25. sold them into the hand of <sup>k</sup>Chushan-rishathaim king of <sup>l</sup>Meso-  
<sup>j</sup> ch. 2. 14. potamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim  
<sup>k</sup> Hab. 3. 7.

<sup>1</sup> Or, *suffered*.<sup>2</sup> Heb. *Aram-naharaim*.

was given to Israel, whether by Angel, or prophet, or Urim, nor indeed is it certain whether any message was given. The words may be understood as merely explaining what passed through the Divine mind, and expressing the thoughts which regulated the Divine proceeding.

III. 1. *even as many of Israel, &c.*] These words show that the writer has especially in view the generation which came to man's estate immediately after the close of the wars with the Canaanites (Josh. xxiii. 1). Cp. ii. 10.

3. *lords*] *Seranim*, a title used exclusively of the princes of the five Philistine cities. The title is probably of Phœnician origin.

Joshua appears to have smitten and subdued the Hivites as far north as Baal-Gad, in the valley of Lebanon under Mount Hermon (Josh. xi. 17, xii. 7), but no further (Josh. xiii. 5). There was an unsubdued Hivite population to the north of Baal-hermon (probably Baal-Gad under Hermon, since it is not synonymous with Hermon; see 1 Chr. v. 23), to the entering in of Hamath: i. e. in the fertile valley of Coele-Syria. Hamath is always spoken of as the extreme northern boundary of the land of Canaan. It was the gate of approach to Canaan from Babylon, and all the north (Zech. ix. 2; Jer. xxxix. 5). It formed part of the dominions of Solomon (2 Chr. viii. 4), and of the future inheritance of

Israel, as described in vision by Ezekiel (xlvii. 16).

6. See ii. 2 note.

7. *and the groves*] Lit. *Asheroth*, images of Asherah [the goddess companion of Baal]: see Deut. xvi. 21 note.

8. Here we hold again the thread of the proper narrative, which seems as if it ought to have run thus (i. 1): Now, &c. (iii. 8), therefore (or "and") &c.

*served Chushan-Rishathaim*] This is the same phrase as in v. 14. From it is derived the expression, "the times of servitude," as distinguished from "the times of rest," in speaking of the times of the Judges. Mesopotamia, or Aram-naharaim, was the seat of Nimrod's kingdom, and Nimrod was the son of Cush (Gen. x. 8-12). Rishathaim is perhaps the name of a city, or a foreign word altered to a Hebrew form. Nothing is known from history, or the cuneiform inscriptions, of the political condition of Mesopotamia at this time, though Thotmes I. and III. in the 18th Egyptian dynasty are known to have invaded Mesopotamia. It is, however, in accordance with such an aggressive Aramean movement towards Palestine, that as early as the time of Abraham we find the kings of Shinar and of Elam invading the south of Palestine. There is also distinct evidence in the names of the Edomitish kings (Gen. xxxvi. 32, 33, 37) of an Aramean dynasty in Edom

8 eight years. ¶ And when the children of Israel <sup>1</sup>cried unto the LORD, the LORD <sup>2</sup>raised up a <sup>3</sup>deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, *even* <sup>4</sup>Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's 10 younger brother. And <sup>5</sup>the Spirit of the LORD <sup>6</sup>came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of <sup>7</sup>Mesopotamia into his 11 hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim. And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz 12 died. ¶ And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened <sup>8</sup>Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of 13 the LORD. And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and <sup>9</sup>Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed <sup>10</sup>the 14 city of palm trees. So the children of Israel <sup>11</sup>served Eglon the 15 king of Moab eighteen years. ¶ But when the children of Israel <sup>12</sup>cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, <sup>13</sup>a Benjamite, a man <sup>14</sup>left-handed: and

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *saviour*.<sup>2</sup> Heb. *was*.<sup>3</sup> Heb. *Aram*.<sup>4</sup> Or, *the son of Gemini*.<sup>5</sup> Heb. *shut of his right hand*. ch. 20. 16.<sup>1</sup> ver. 15.<sup>2</sup> ch. 2. 16.<sup>3</sup> ch. 1. 13.<sup>4</sup> See Num.

27. 18.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Sam. 11. 9.<sup>6</sup> 2 Chr. 15. 1.<sup>7</sup> ch. 2. 19.<sup>8</sup> 1 Sam. 12.

9.

<sup>9</sup> ch. 5. 14.<sup>10</sup> ch. 1. 16.<sup>11</sup> Deut. 28. 48.<sup>12</sup> ver. 9.

ch. 4. 3.

&amp; 6. 7.

&amp; 10. 10.

1 Sam. 12. 10.

Ps. 22. 6.

&amp; 100. 44.

&amp; 107. 13, 19.

about the time of the early Judges. Cp., too, Job i. 17.

9. Othniel was already distinguished in Joshua's lifetime as a brave and successful leader. See Josh. xv. 16, 17.

10. *and the Spirit of the LORD came upon him*] The phrase occurs frequently in this Book and in the Books of Samuel and Kings. It marks the peculiar office of the Judges. They were saviours (v. 9 marg. Neh. ix. 27) called and directed by the Holy Spirit, Who endued them with extraordinary wisdom, courage, and strength for the work which lay before them (cp. vi. 34, xi. 29, xiii. 25, xiv. 6. 19), and were in this respect types of Christ the "Judge of Israel" (Mic. v. 1), in Whom "the Spirit of the Lord God" was "without measure" (Isai. xi. 2, lxi. 1; Matt. xii. 18-21; Joh. i. 32; Acts xiii. 2).

11. *the land* means here, as in i. 2, not the whole land of Canaan, but the part concerned, probably the land of the tribe of Judah. *Forty years*, here and elsewhere, is (like *four score years*, v. 30) a round number, perhaps equivalent to a generation.

12. The "strengthening" Eglon was the special work of God, and because Israel "had done evil," &c. Samuel's comment on the event is to the same effect (1 Sam. xii. 9).

13. The children of Ammon (Beni-Ammon), almost always so spoken of from their ancestor Ben-ammi (Gen. xix. 38), seem to be under the leadership of the king of Moab, as do also the Amalekites: this is perhaps the *strengthening* spoken of in v. 12. In ch. vi. the combination is Midianites, Amalekites, and children of the East, or Arab tribes. In the narrative of Jephthah's judgeship, the Ammonites alone are mentioned; but with a reference to the Moabites, and as if they were one people (xi. 24).

The Amalekites appear as the constant and bitter foes of the Israelites (Exod. xvii. 8 notes and reff.); and the naming a mountain in Ephraim, "*the mount of the Amalekites*" (xii. 15) is probably a memorial of this joint invasion of Moabites and Amalekites, and marks the scene either of their occupation, or of some signal victory over them.

The city of palm trees: i.e. Jericho (i. 16), having been utterly destroyed by Joshua, and not rebuilt till the time of Ahab (Josh. vi. 24-26; 1 K. xvi. 34), can only have existed at this time as an unwall'd village,—like Jerusalem after its destruction by Nebuzaradan, till Nehemiah rebuilt its walls—and like its modern representative er-Riha, a village with a fortress for the Turkish garrison. This occupation of Jericho should be compared with the invasion in x. 9, where two out of the three tribes named, Benjamin and Ephraim, are the same as those here concerned, and where (x. 7) the Philistines are coupled with the Ammonites, just as here (v. 31) the Philistines are mentioned in near connexion with the Moabites. See Introd. p. 69.

15. *But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer*] The very same words as are used at v. 9. See, too, ii. 16, 18, and Neh. ix. 27.

Ehud "the Benjamite" was of the family or house of Gera (2 Sam. xvi. 5), the son of Bela, Benjamin's first-born, born before Jacob's descent into Egypt (Gen. xli. 21), and then included among "the sons of Benjamin." The genealogy in 1 Chr. viii. 6 intimates that Ehud (apparently written Abihud in r. 3) became the head of a separate house.

*left-handed*] See marg. The phrase is thought to describe not so much a defect as

by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king  
 16 of Moab. But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges,  
 of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his  
 17 right thigh. And he brought the present unto Eglon king of  
 18 Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man. And when he had made  
 an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare  
 \* Josh. 4. 20. 19 the present. But he himself turned again <sup>2</sup>from the <sup>1</sup>quarries  
 that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee,  
 O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him  
 20 went out from him. And Ehud came unto him; and he was  
 sitting in <sup>2</sup>a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone.  
 And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he  
 21 arose out of his seat. And Ehud put forth his left hand, and  
 took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly:  
 22 and the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed  
 upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his  
 23 belly; and <sup>3</sup>the dirt came out. Then Ehud went forth through  
 the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and  
 24 locked them. When he was gone out, his servants came; and  
 when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour were  
 locked, they said, Surely he <sup>4</sup>covereth his feet in his summer  
 25 chamber. And they tarried till they were ashamed: and,  
 behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they  
 took a key, and opened them: and, behold, their lord was fallen  
 26 down dead on the earth. And Ehud escaped while they tarried,  
 27 and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath. And

<sup>1</sup> Or, graven images.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. a parlour of cooling: See Amos 3. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Or, it came out at the fundament.

<sup>4</sup> Or, doeth his casement, 1 Sam. 24. 3.

the power to use left and right hands equally well (cp. xx. 16; 1 Chr. xii. 2).

a present] i.e. tribute (2 Sam. viii. 2, 6; 1 K. iv. 21; Ps. lxxii. 10). The employment of Ehud for this purpose points him out as a chief of some distinction. He would be attended by a numerous suite (v. 18). We may conclude that the destruction of the Benjamites (ch. xx.) had not taken place at this time.

18. upon his right thigh] The proper side for a left-handed man. It would give him the appearance of being unarmed. The narrative shows clearly that his action was premeditated (v. 21).

19. Gilgal was in the immediate neighbourhood of Jericho (ii. 1), where doubtless Eglon held his court at this time (v. 13).

quarries] Some take the original of this word in its common meaning of carved images or idols (see marg.).

20. Probably Ehud's first message (v. 19) had been delivered to the attendants, and by them carried to the king. Now Ehud is admitted to the king's presence, into the cool upper chamber.

I have a message from God unto thee] Ehud believed himself to be accomplishing the Divine mandate, and so his words were true in a certain sense. But it was also a strata-  
 gem to cause the king to rise, that the

thrust might be sure. [The king rose at once, in true Oriental respect for a Divine message, or from fear (cp. Josh. ix. 24).]

22. The A.V. and margin give different explanations of the last words of this verse. Others explain it of a vestibule or chamber, through which Ehud passed into the porch where the entrance doors were. He locked the doors, took the key with him, and then retired through the midst of the attendants below [or, more probably, through the door which communicated directly with the outside].

24. he covereth his feet] Cp. marg. reff. The explanation of the phrase as "taking sleep" suits both passages best.

25. a key] Literally "an opener." Probably a wooden instrument with which they either lifted up the latch within, or drew back the wooden bar or bolt. The chief officer of Eglon's household probably had a second key (cp. Isai. xxii. 15, 20-22, xxxvii. 2).

26. Seirath] "The forest" or "weald," which evidently bordered on the cultivated plain near Gilgal, and extended into "the mountain or hill country of Ephraim." Once there, he was safe from pursuit (cp. 1 Sam. xiii. 6), and quickly collected a strong force of Ephraimites and probably the bordering Benjamites.

it came to pass, when he was come, that <sup>v</sup>he blew a trumpet in the <sup>a</sup>mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down  
 28 with him from the mount, and he before them. And he said unto them, Follow after me: for <sup>a</sup>the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took <sup>b</sup>the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and  
 29 suffered not a man to pass over. And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all <sup>1</sup>lusty, and all men of  
 30 valour; and there escaped not a man. So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And <sup>c</sup>the land had rest  
 31 fourscore years. ¶ And after him was <sup>d</sup>Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men <sup>e</sup>with an ox goad: <sup>f</sup>and he also delivered <sup>g</sup>Israel.

**CHAP. 4.** AND <sup>a</sup>the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of  
 2 the LORD, when Ehud was dead. And the LORD <sup>b</sup>sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in <sup>c</sup>Hazor; the captain of whose host was <sup>d</sup>Sisera, which dwelt in <sup>e</sup>Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred <sup>f</sup>chariots of iron; and twenty years <sup>g</sup>he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

<sup>1</sup> Heb *fat*.

<sup>v</sup> ch. 5. 14.  
<sup>a</sup> & 6. 34.  
<sup>1</sup> Sam. 13. 3.  
<sup>2</sup> Josh. 17. 15.  
<sup>a</sup> ch. 7. 9.  
<sup>1</sup> Sam. 17. 47.  
<sup>b</sup> Josh. 2. 7.  
<sup>c</sup> ch. 12. 5.  
<sup>d</sup> ver. 11.  
<sup>e</sup> ch. 5. 6, 8.  
<sup>1</sup> Sam. 13. 19, 22.  
<sup>f</sup> 1 Sam. 17. 47, 50.  
<sup>g</sup> ch. 2. 16.  
<sup>v</sup> ch. 4. 1, 3.  
<sup>a</sup> & 10. 7, 17.  
<sup>1</sup> Sam. 4. 1.  
<sup>a</sup> ch. 2. 10.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. 2. 14.  
<sup>c</sup> Josh. 11. 1, 10.  
<sup>d</sup> & 19. 36.  
<sup>e</sup> 1 Sam. 12. 9.  
<sup>f</sup> Ps. 83. 9.  
<sup>g</sup> ver. 13. 10.  
<sup>f</sup> ch. 1. 19.  
<sup>v</sup> ch. 6. 8.  
<sup>f</sup> Ps. 106. 42.

28. Ehud "went down" from the mountain of Ephraim into the Jordan valley beneath it, straight to the Jordan fords (Josh. ii. 7), so as to intercept all communication between the Moabites on the west side and their countrymen on the east.

30. *the land* i.e. that portion of it which had suffered from the oppression of Moab, probably Benjamin and Ephraim chiefly (see v. 11).

In judging of the nature of Ehud's act there are many considerations which must greatly modify our judgment. Acts of violence or cunning, done in an age when human society applauded such acts, when the best men of the age thought them right, and when men were obliged to take the law into their own hands in self-defence, are very different from the same acts done in an age when the enlightened consciences of men generally condemn them, and when the law of the land and the law of nations give individuals adequate security. We can allow to Ehud faith and courage and patriotism, without being blind to those defective views of moral right which made him and his countrymen glory in an act which in the light of Christianity is a crime. It is remarkable that neither Ehud nor Jael are included in St. Paul's list in Heb. xi. 32.

31. From this verse and v. 6 we may gather that Shamgar was contemporary with Jael, and that he only procured a temporary and partial deliverance for Israel by his exploit. He may have been of the tribe of Judah.

*an ox goad* An instrument of wood about eight feet long, armed with an iron spike or point at one end, with which to spur the

ox at plough, and with an iron scraper at the other end with which to detach the earth from the ploughshare when it became encumbered with it. The fact of their deliverer having no better weapon enhances his faith, and the power of his Divine helper. At the same time it shows how low the men of Judah were brought at this time, being disarmed by their oppressors (v. 8), as was also the case later (1 Sam. xiii. 19).

IV. 2. See Josh. xi. 1 note. Since the events there narrated, Hazor must have been rebuilt, and have resumed its position as the metropolis of the northern Canaanites; the other cities must also have resumed their independence, and restored the fallen dynasties.

Harosheth [identified by Conder with El Harathiyeh, see v. 6] is marked by the addition of *the Gentiles*, as in *Galilee of the nations* (Gen. xiv. 1; Isai. ix. 1). The name *Harosheth* signifies *workmanship, cutting and carving*, whether in stone or wood (Ex. xxxi. 5), and hence might be applied to the place where such works are carried on. It has been conjectured that this being a great timber district, rich in cedars and fir-trees, and near Great Zidon (Josh. xi. 8), Jabin kept a large number of oppressed Israelites at work in hewing wood, and preparing it at Harosheth for transport to Zidon; and that these woodcutters, armed with axes and hatchets, formed the soldiers of Barak's army.

3. *oppressed* The same word is used (Ex. iii. 9) of the oppression of Israel by the Egyptians. If they were put to task-work in hewing timber, their condition was very like that of their ancestors making bricks.

- 4 And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged  
 5 Israel at that time. <sup>a</sup>And she dwelt under the palm tree of  
 Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in mount Ephraim: and  
 6 the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. And she  
 sent and called 'Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-  
 naphthali, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel  
 commanded, *saying*, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and  
 take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali  
 7 and of the children of Zebulun? And 'I will draw unto thee to  
 the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his  
 chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine  
 8 hand. And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then  
 I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.  
 9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the  
 journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the  
 Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Debo-
- <sup>1</sup> Gen. 35. 8.  
<sup>1</sup> Heb. 11. 32.  
<sup>2</sup> Josh. 12. 22.  
<sup>1</sup> Ex. 15. 1.  
<sup>11</sup> ch. 5. 21.  
<sup>1</sup> Kin. 18. 40.  
<sup>1</sup> Is. 83. 9.  
<sup>11</sup> ch. 2. 14.

4. *Deborah, a prophetess*] Her name, meaning *a bee*, is the same as that of Rebekah's nurse (marg. ref.). The reason of her pre-eminence is added. She was "a woman, a prophetess," like Miriam (Ex. xv. 20); Huldah (2 K. xxii. 14), &c. In *rr.* 6, 9, 14, we have examples of her prophetic powers, and in *ch. v.* a noble specimen of prophetic song. Though the other Judges are not called prophets, yet they all seem to have had direct communications from God, either of knowledge, or power, or both (*cp.* iii. 10 note).

5. *she dwelt*] Rather, "she sat," viz. to judge the people (*r.* 10), but not in the usual place, "the gate" (Ruth iv. 1, 2; Prov. xxii. 22). It suited her character, and the wild unsafe times better, that she should sit under a palm-tree in the secure heights of Mount Ephraim, between Ramah and Bethel (*xx.* 33 note). This verse shows that the Judges exercised the civil as well as military functions of rulers (1 Sam. vii. 15-17).

6. The name *Barak* signifies *lightning*, an appropriate name for a warrior. It is found also as *Barca* or *Barcas*, among Punic proper names. *Cp.* Mark iii. 17. On Kedesh-Naphtali see marg. ref.

Deborah speaks of God as *Jehorah the God of Israel*, because she speaks, as it were, in the presence of the heathen enemies of Israel, and to remind the Israelites, in the day of their distress, that He was ready to perform the mercy promised to their fathers, and to remember His holy Covenant. This title, too, would recall to their memories in an instant all His past acts in Egypt, at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, and in the conquest of Canaan.

The object of "drawing (toward Mount Tabor)" rather, spreading out, *cp.* xx. 37) was to effect a junction of the northern tribes with the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin, who were separated from them by the plain of Esdraelon, where Sisera's chariots would naturally congregate and be most effective. Mount Tabor rises from the plain of Es-

draelon, about 1,865 ft. above the sea, and its broad top of nearly a mile in circumference afforded a strong position, out of reach of Sisera's chariots. If El Harathlyeh be Harosheth, Sisera must have marched from the west. Harathlyeh is a height in the range which separates Esdraelon from the plains of Acre, under which the Kishon breaks through in its course to the sea.

7. The brook or stream Kishon (Nahr Mukutta), so called from its winding course, caused by the dead level of the plain of Esdraelon through which it flows, rises, in respect to one of its sources or feeders, in Mount Tabor, and flows nearly due west through the plain, under Mount Carmel, and into the Bay of Acre. In the early or eastern part of its course, before it is recruited by the springs on Carmel, it is nothing but a torrent, often dry, but liable to swell very suddenly and dangerously, and to overflow its banks in early spring, after rain or the melting of snow. The ground on the banks of the Kishon near Megiddo [Mujedd'a, see Josh. xii. 21 note] becomes an impassable morass under the same circumstances, and would be particularly dangerous to a large number of chariots.

8. Barak, like Gideon (*vi.* 15, 36-40), and Abraham (*Gen.* xv. 2, 3, xvii. 18), and Moses (*Ex.* iv. 10, 13), and Peter (*Matt.* xiv. 30, 31), exhibited some weakness of faith at first. But this only makes his example more profitable for our encouragement, though he himself suffered some loss by his weakness (*r.* 9).

9. Mark the unhesitating faith and courage of Deborah, and the rebuke to Barak's timidity, "The Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman" (*Jael*, *r.* 22). For a similar use of a weak instrument, that the excellency of the power might be of God, compare the history of Gideon and his 300, David and his sling, Shamgar and his oxgoad, Samson and the jawbone of the ass. (See 1 Cor. i. 26-31.) Barak would pro-

- 10 rah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. And Barak called  
 °Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten  
 thousand men <sup>2</sup>at his feet; and Deborah went up with him.
- 11 ¶ Now Heber <sup>1</sup>the Kenite, *which was* of the children of  
 °Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from  
 the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim,  
 12 <sup>3</sup>which is by Kedesh. ¶ And they shewed Sisera that Barak the  
 13 son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. And Sisera  
 14 gathered together all his chariots, *even* nine hundred chariots  
 of iron, and all the people that *were* with him, from Harosheth  
 14 of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. ¶ And Deborah said  
 unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath  
 delivered Sisera into thine hand: <sup>4</sup>is not the LORD gone out  
 before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten  
 15 thousand men after him. And <sup>5</sup>the LORD discomfited Sisera,  
 and all *his* chariots, and all *his* host, with the edge of the  
 sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off *his* chariot,  
 16 and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued after the chariots,  
 and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all  
 the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; *and* there  
 17 was not <sup>6</sup>a man left. ¶ Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to  
 the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for *there was*  
 peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber  
 18 the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto  
 him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when  
 he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a  
 19 <sup>7</sup>mantle. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little  
 water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened <sup>8</sup>a bottle of  
 20 milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. Again he said  
 unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when

° ch. 5. 18.  
 ° See Ex. 11.  
 1 Kin. 20. 10.  
 ° ch. 1. 16.  
 ° Num. 10. 29.  
 ° ver. 6.

4 Dent. 9. 3.  
 2 Sam. 5. 24.  
 Ps. 68. 7.  
 Isai. 52. 12.  
 ° Ps. 83. 9.  
 10.  
 See Josh.  
 10. 10.

° ch. 5. 25.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *gathered by cry, or proclamation.*

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *unto one.*

<sup>3</sup> Or, *rug, or blanket.*

bably think *the woman* must be Deborah. The prophecy was only explained by its fulfilment. Her presence as a prophetess would give a divine sanction to Barak's attempt to raise the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. To Barak himself it would be a pledge of her truth and sincerity. She probably commissioned some chief to raise the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh (v. 14, cp. Ps. lxxx. 2), while she went with Barak and mustered Zebulun, Naphtali, and Issachar.

10. Rather, "and ten thousand men went up (to Tabor) at his feet;" i.e. as his followers ("after him," v. 14).

11. Read, "Heber the Kenite had severed himself from the Kenites which were of the children of Hobab," &c., "unto the oak (or terebinth tree) in Zaanaim" [or Bitzaanaim, which Conder identifies with Bessum, twelve miles S.E. of Tabor, and near Kedesh on the Sea of Galilee]. This migration of Heber the Kenite, with a portion of his tribe, from the south of Judah to the north of Naphtali, perhaps caused by Philistine oppression, had clearly taken place recently. It is mentioned here to account for the subsequent narrative,

but possibly also because the news of the great muster of the Israelites at Kedesh had been carried to Sisera by some of the tribe (v. 12), whose tents we are here informed were in the immediate neighbourhood of Kedesh.

15. *lighted down off his chariot*] Probably his chariot stuck in the morass (note on v. 7); or he might leave his chariot in order to mislead his pursuers, and in hope of gaining a place of safety while they were following the track of the chariot-wheels and the bulk of the host.

16. What with the overflowing of the Kishon (v. 21), by which numbers were drowned, and the panic which had seized the defeated army, and made them an easy prey to the sword of the pursuing Israelites, Sisera's whole force was cut to pieces and broken up.

17. Sisera went, not to Heber's tent, but to Jael's, as more secure from pursuit. Women occupied a separate tent. (Gen. xviii. 6, 10, xxiv. 67.)

20. *Stand in the door, &c.*] The characteristic duplicity of the Oriental character, both in Sisera and Jael, is very forcibly depicted in this narrative. It is only by the

- any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any  
 21 man here? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael Heber's wife  
 \* took a nail of the tent, and <sup>1</sup>took an hammer in her hand, and  
 went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and  
 fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary.  
 22 So he died. And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came  
 out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show  
 thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her  
 tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail *was* in his temples.  
 \* Ps. 18. 47. 23 ¶ So <sup>2</sup>God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before  
 24 the children of Israel. And the hand of the children of Israel  
<sup>2</sup>prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan,  
 until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.  
 CHAP. 5. THEN <sup>a</sup>sung Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on  
 that day, saying,  
 2 Praise ye the LORD for the <sup>b</sup>avenging of Israel,  
 "When the people willingly offered themselves.  
 3 "Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;  
 I, *even* I, will sing unto the LORD;  
 I will sing *praise* to the LORD God of Israel.  
 \* Deut. 33. 2. 4 ¶ LORD, "when thou wentest out of Seir,  
 When thou marchest out of the field of Edom,  
 The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped,  
 The clouds also dropped water.  
 5 "The mountains <sup>3</sup>melted from before the LORD,  
*Even* <sup>a</sup>that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.  
 6 ¶ In the days of 'Shamgar the son of Anath,  
 In the days of <sup>k</sup>Jael, <sup>l</sup>the highways were unoccupied,  
 And the <sup>4</sup>travellers walked through <sup>5</sup>byways.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 18.  
title.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 18. 47.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Chr. 17.

16.

<sup>d</sup> Deut. 32.

1, 3.

Ps. 2. 10.

\* Deut. 33. 2.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Sam. 22. 4.

Isai. 64. 3.

<sup>g</sup> Deut. 4. 11.

Ps. 97. 5.

<sup>h</sup> Ex. 19. 18.

<sup>i</sup> ch. 3. 31.

<sup>k</sup> ch. 4. 17.

<sup>l</sup> Lev. 26. 22.

Isai. 33. 8.

Lam. 1. 4.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *pnt*.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *going went and was hard*.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *flowed*.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *walkers of paths*.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. *crooked ways*.

light of the Gospel that the law of truth is fully revealed.

21. If we can overlook the treachery and violence which belonged to the morals of the age and country, and bear in mind Jael's ardent sympathies with the oppressed people of God, her faith in the right of Israel to possess the land in which they were now slaves, her zeal for the glory of Jehovah as against the gods of Canaan, and the heroic courage and firmness with which she executed her deadly purpose, we shall be ready to yield to her the praise which is her due. See iii. 30 note.

24. See marg. The meaning is, that Barak's great victory was the beginning of a successful resistance to Jabin, by which the Israelites recovered their independence, and finally broke the Canaanite power. Accordingly we hear no more of Canaanite domination in the Book of Judges.

V. 1. Deborah, as "a prophetess," both composed and sang this noble ode, which, for poetic spirit and lyric fire, is not surpassed by any of the sacred songs in the Bible. And, as Miriam took up the first verse of the song of Moses (Ex. xv. 21), and sang it as an antiphon, so Barak, with the chorus of men, answered the song of

Deborah by singing v. 2, which is also exactly suited for an antiphon, summing up as it does the subject matter of the whole ode. Cp. David's example (2 Sam. vi. 15).

2. Render "For the leading of the leaders in Israel (the princes), for the willingness of the people (to follow them) bless ye the Lord." See Deut. xxxii. 42 note, and cp. vv. 9 and 13, where the *nobles* and the *people* are again contrasted.

4. Cp. Ps. lxxviii. 7-9, and Habak. iii. 3-16. The three passages relate to the same events, and mutually explain each other. The subject of them is the triumphant march of Israel, with the LORD at their head, to take possession of Canaan, and the overthrow of Sihon, Og, and the Midianites. This march commenced from Kadesh, in the immediate neighbourhood of Seir, and the victories which followed were an exact parallel to the victory of Deborah and Barak, accompanied as it had been with the storm which made Kishon to overflow his banks.

6. Words descriptive of a state of weakness and fear, so that Israel could not frequent the highways. It is a graphic description of a country occupied by an enemy.



- 7 *The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel,*  
Until that I Deborah arose,  
That I arose <sup>m</sup>a mother in Israel.
- 8 They <sup>n</sup>chose new gods;  
Then *was* war in the gates:  
<sup>o</sup>Was there a shield or spear seen  
Among forty thousand in Israel?
- 9 My heart *is* toward the governors of Israel,  
That <sup>p</sup>offered themselves willingly among the people.  
Bless ye the LORD.
- 10 ¶ <sup>q</sup>Speak, ye <sup>r</sup>that ride on white asses,  
<sup>s</sup>Ye that sit in judgment,  
And walk by the way.
- 11 *They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the*  
places of drawing water,  
There shall they rehearse the <sup>t</sup>righteous acts of the LORD,  
*Even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his vil-*  
lages in Israel:  
Then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.
- 12 ¶ <sup>u</sup>Awake, awake, Deborah:  
Awake, awakō, utter a song:  
Arise, Barak, and <sup>v</sup>lead thy captivity captive, thou son of  
Abinoam.
- 13 Then he made him that remaineth <sup>w</sup>have dominion over the  
nobles among the people:  
The LORD made me have dominion over the mighty.
- 14 ¶ <sup>x</sup>Out of Ephraim *was there* a root of them <sup>y</sup>against  
Amalek;  
After thee, Benjamin, among thy people;  
Out of <sup>z</sup>Machir came down governors,

<sup>m</sup> Is. 49. 23.<sup>n</sup> Deut. 32.  
16.<sup>o</sup> So 1 Sam.  
13. 19, 22.<sup>p</sup> ver. 2.<sup>q</sup> Ps. 105. 2.  
& 145. 5.<sup>r</sup> ch. 10. 4.  
& 12. 14.<sup>s</sup> Ps. 107. 22.<sup>t</sup> 1 Sam. 12. 7.  
Ps. 145. 7.<sup>u</sup> Ps. 57. 8.<sup>v</sup> Ps. 68. 18.<sup>w</sup> Ps. 49. 11.<sup>x</sup> ch. 3. 27.  
<sup>y</sup> ch. 3. 13.<sup>z</sup> Num. 32.  
39, 40.<sup>1</sup> Or, *Meditate*.<sup>2</sup> Heb. *righteousnesses of the Lord*.

7. Render the word *villages* (here and in r. 11) *judgment, rule, or judges, rulers*. The sense is "The princes (or magistrates) ceased in Israel," i.e. there was no one to do justice in the gate, or defend men from their oppressors.

8. The "*war in the gates*" describes the hostile attacks of the Canaanites, which were the punishment of the idolatry of the Israelites (cp. marg. reff.), and the reduction of Israel to an unarmed and unresisting state under the Philistine dominion. See iii. 31 note.

9. *My heart*, &c.] In this deplorable weakness of Israel how noble was the conduct of the governors who volunteered to lead the people against their oppressors. Deborah's heart was filled with admiration as she thought of their patriotic devotion, and broke out into thanksgiving to Jehovah.

10. *ye that ride on white asses*, &c.] i.e. nobles or magistrates. Deborah appeals to the classes mentioned in rr. 6, 7, to bear witness to the happy change that had followed the overthrow of Jabin.

*that sit in judgment*] Rather "*that sit on saddles, or horse-cloths*," a further description of those who ride on asses.

11. The sense of the A. V. is that, whereas formerly they could not go in safety to draw water from their wells, but were shot at by the archers of the enemy, now they were delivered from such tumults; and standing round the wells in security rehearsed the righteous acts of the Lord in delivering them, and "*the righteous acts of His government in Israel*." (See v. 7).

*then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates*] Israelites, who had hid themselves in caves and deserts, could return in security to the gates of their own cities for justice, or commerce, or to dwell there, now that the Canaanite was subdued.

12. Deborah incites Barak to carry off as his prey the captive Canaanites and their sheep and cattle (their "*captivity*").

13. This verse is otherwise rendered: "*then a remnant of the nobles came down: the people of the LORD came down for me against the mighty*." The following verses mention in detail who this "*remnant*" were.

14. Render "*Of Ephraim* (Deborah's own tribe) *came down those whose root is in Mount Amalek* (xii. 15); *after thee* (O Ephraim) *came Benjamin amongst thy*

- And out of Zebulun they that <sup>1</sup>handle the pen of the writer.
- <sup>c</sup> ch. 4. 14. 15 And the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah;  
Even Issachar, and also <sup>c</sup>Barak:  
He was sent on <sup>2</sup>foot into the valley.  
<sup>3</sup>For the divisions of Reuben  
*There were* great <sup>4</sup>thoughts of heart.
- <sup>d</sup> Num. 32. 1. 16 Why abodest thou <sup>d</sup>among the sheepfolds,  
To hear the bleatings of the flocks?  
<sup>e</sup>For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great searchings  
of heart.
- <sup>f</sup> See Josh. 13. 25, 31. 17 <sup>f</sup>Gilead abode beyond Jordan:  
And why did Dan remain in ships?  
<sup>g</sup>Josh. 10. 20, 31. <sup>g</sup>Asher continued on the sea <sup>h</sup>shore,  
And abode in his <sup>h</sup>breaches.
- <sup>i</sup> ch. 4. 10. 18 <sup>i</sup>Zebulun and Naphtali *were* a people that <sup>j</sup>jeopardied their  
lives  
Unto the death in the high places of the field.
- 19 ¶The kings came *and* fought,  
Then fought the kings of Canaan  
In Tanach by the waters of Megiddo:  
<sup>k</sup>They took no gain of money.
- <sup>l</sup> Ps. 44. 12. 20 <sup>l</sup>They fought from heaven;  
<sup>m</sup>See Josh. 10. 11. <sup>m</sup>The stars in their <sup>n</sup>courses fought against Sisera.
- <sup>n</sup> Ps. 77. 17. 21 <sup>n</sup>The river of Kishon swept them away,  
<sup>o</sup> ch. 4. 15. That ancient river, the river Kishon.  
<sup>o</sup> ch. 4. 7. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strongly.
- 22 Then were the horsehoofs broken
- <sup>1</sup> Heb. *draw with the pen, &c.* <sup>4</sup> Heb. *impressions.* <sup>7</sup> Or, *creeks.*  
<sup>2</sup> Heb. *his feet.* <sup>5</sup> Or, *In.* <sup>8</sup> Heb. *exposed to reproach.*  
<sup>3</sup> Or, *In the divisions, &c.* <sup>6</sup> Or, *port.* <sup>9</sup> Heb. *paths.*

people; of Machir (the west-Jordanic families of Manasseh. See Josh. xvii. 1-6) there came down the chiefs, and of Zebulun they that handle the staff of the officer" the military scribe, whose duty it was, like that of the Roman tribunes, to keep the muster roll, and superintend the recruiting of the army. (See 2 K. xxv. 19.)

15. *even Issachar, &c.* i.e. "and, as well as Issachar, Barak also with the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, rushed down on foot from Mount Tabor into the valley to attack the iron chariots of Sisera."

For the divisions] Better: "among the brooks." Reuben ought to have followed in this catalogue of patriots, but with that abruptness for which this poem is so conspicuous, Deborah adverts to his absence instead.

16. *great searchings (thoughts, v. 15) of heart*] Deborah means to say that at first the Reubenites made magnanimous resolutions to help their brethren against Jabin. But they stayed at home, and let the opportunity slip.

17. The land of Gilead, on the east of Jordan, was divided between Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, who are both comprehended here. Joppa was in the territory

of Dan (Josh. xix. 46), and was in later times the sea-port for Jerusalem.

*his breaches*] Rather *havens*; i.e. the creeks and bays and river-mouths by which their coast was broken. Josh. xix. 29.

18. In contrast with the selfishness of the tribes just named, Deborah reverts with enthusiasm to the heroic prowess of Zebulun and Naphtali.

19. The Canaanite hosts are now described, led to battle by their numerous kings. (Cp. Josh. xii. 21.)

*they took no gain of money*] i.e. either they got no booty, as they expected, or, they did not fight for plunder, but for life and victory (cp. iv. 16 and v. 30).

20. God fought on the side of Israel, and gave them the victory. Josephus relates that, just as the battle began, a violent tempest came on with a great downfall of rain, and a hailstorm, which, driving full in the faces of the Canaanites, so blinded and benumbed them with cold, that they could neither use their bows with effect nor even hold their swords.

21. The word translated *ancient* occurs only here. The phrase probably means that Kishon was celebrated from ancient times on account of the battles fought on its banks.

By the means of the 'pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones.

- 23 ¶ Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD,  
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;  
"Because they came not to the help "of the LORD,  
To the help of the LORD against the mighty. " ch. 21. 9.  
Neh. 3. 5.
- 24 ¶ Blessed above women shall °Jael  
The wife of Heber the Kenite be,  
"Blessed shall she be above women in the tent. " 1 Sam. 17.  
47. & 18. 17.  
° ch. 4. 17.
- 25 "He asked water, and she gave him milk;  
She brought forth butter in a lordly dish. " Luke 1. 28.  
" ch. 4. 10.
- 26 "She put her hand to the nail,  
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;  
And "with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off  
his head,  
When she had pierced and stricken through his temples.
- 27 "At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down:  
At her feet he bowed, he fell:  
Where he bowed, there he fell down "dead.
- 28 ¶ The mother of Sisera looked out at a window,  
And cried through the lattice,  
Why is his chariot so long in coming?  
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
- 29 Her wise ladies answered her,  
Yea, she returned "answer to herself,
- 30 "Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey;  
"To every man a damsel or two;  
To Sisera a prey of divers colours,  
A prey of divers colours of needlework,  
Of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for  
the necks of them that take the spoil?
- 31 ¶ "So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD:  
But let them that love him be "as the sun "when he  
goeth forth in his might.  
And the land had rest forty years.

<sup>1</sup> Or, *tramlings*, or, *plung-  
ings*.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *she hammered*.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *Between*.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *destroyed*.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. *her words*.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. *to the head of a  
man*.

22. Probably an allusion to the frantic efforts of the chariot-horses to disengage themselves from the morass (iv. 15 note).

mighty ones] Applied to bulls (Ps. xxii. 12) and horses (Jer. viii. 16, xlvii. 3, l. 11); elsewhere, as probably here, to men.

23. The inhabitants of Meroz (a village 12 miles from Samaria) hung back, and gave no help in the day of battle, although it was Jehovah Who called them. Hence the curse pronounced by the Angel of the Lord.

24. The blessing here pronounced is in strong contrast with the curse of Meroz. Deborah speaks of Jael's deed by the light of her own age, which did not make manifest the evil of guile and bloodshed; the light in ours does.

25. *butter*] Rather *curdled milk*, probably a fermented and intoxicating drink. All

these marks of respect and friendship would lull Sisera into security.

26. Rather "she smote his head, and she struck and pierced through his temple."

28. The scene is changed to the palace of Sisera.

30. Render the latter part of the verse "a booty of dyed garments for Sisera, a booty of dyed garments and of party-coloured cloth, a dyed garment and two party-coloured clothes for the necks of the booty," the spoil or booty being either captive damsels, or captive cattle on whose necks these clothes are to be placed (either as ornament or as a burden; cp. viii. 21, 26). But possibly "the necks of the booty" may mean the backs or shoulders (of men or beasts) laden with booty.

31. A most striking conclusion, in which the spiritual truth, which the whole narra-

- " ch. 2. 10. **CHAP. 6.** "AND the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand <sup>1</sup>of Midian 2 seven years. And the hand of Midian <sup>1</sup>prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them <sup>1</sup>the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong 3 holds. And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and <sup>2</sup>the Amalekites, <sup>2</sup>and the children of the 4 east, even they came up against them; and they encamped against them, and <sup>2</sup>destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither 5 <sup>2</sup>sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came <sup>2</sup>as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they 6 entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel 7 <sup>2</sup>cried unto the LORD. ¶And it came to pass, when the children 8 of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, that the LORD sent <sup>3</sup>a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of 9 bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and <sup>1</sup>drave them 10 out from before you, and gave you their land; and I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; <sup>2</sup>fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice. 11 ¶And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *was strong*.<sup>2</sup> Or, *goat*.<sup>3</sup> Heb. *a man a prophet*.

tive is intended to convey, comes out. The enemies of the Lord will perish like the host of Sisera, and all their hopes will end, like those of Sisera's mother, in bitter disappointment and shame; but all that love our Lord Jesus Christ shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Cp. Matt. xiii. 43; Dan. xii. 3.

VI. 1. *Midian*] See Gen. xxv. 2 note. They were remarkable not only for the vast number of their cattle (v. 5; Num. xxxi. 32-39), but also for their great wealth in gold and other metal ornaments, showing their connexion with a gold country. (Cp. Num. xxxi. 22, 50-54, with viii. 24-26.) At this time they were allies of the Amalekites and of the Arabian tribes called collectively "the children of the East" (v. 3). They seem to have extended their settlements to the east of Jordan, and to have belonged to the larger section of Arabs called Ishmaelites (viii. 24).

2. The word rendered *dens* is only found in this passage. It is best explained of ravines hollowed out by torrents, which the Israelites made into hiding-places.

4. Gaza indicates the extreme point south to which they spread their devastations, crossing the Jordan near Bethshan (Scythopolis), and entering by the valley of Jezreel, and sweeping along the whole of the maritime plain or Shephelah.

5. *grasshoppers*] Rather locusts (cp. Ex. x. 4-6, 14, 15; Joel i., ii.; Ps. lxxviii. 46).

8. *a prophet*] His name is not given. (Cp. 1 K. xiii.) This message is somewhat similar to that of the Angel, ii. 1-3. The reference to Ex. xx. 2 is plain, and supposes the people to whom the prophet addresses these words to be familiar with the facts recorded in that text.

10. A similar use of the name *Amorite*, instead of the more usual name *Canaanite*, occurs in Josh. xxiv. 15, 18. Perhaps a special reason may be found for the use of *Amorite*, if the prophet was addressing those who dwelt in the mountains, where the Amorites chiefly dwelt. The idolatries of the Amorites seem, too, to have been pre-eminently abominable (see 2 K. xxi. 11; 1 K. xxi. 26). It should be observed that the prophet's language, as it traces the misery of Israel to their sins, so also intimates the necessity of repentance and of breaking off their sins—specially the sin of idolatry—as preliminary to any deliverance. In exact accordance with this view, Gideon commences his work by throwing down the altar of Baal, and building up the altar of Jehovah (xx. 24, 25).

11. *an oak*] "The oak," indicating it as a well-known tree, still standing in the writer's days.

There was another Ophrah in Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 23). This Ophrah was in Manasseh, and was the village of Joash, the head, apparently, of the family of Abiezer, which was one of the families of Gilead,

which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash <sup>1</sup>the Abi-ezrite :  
 and his son <sup>2</sup>Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, <sup>3</sup>to hide  
 12 *it* from the Midianites. And the <sup>4</sup>angel of the LORD appeared  
 unto him, and said unto him, The LORD *is* <sup>5</sup>with thee, thou  
 13 mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, Oh my  
 LORD, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us ?  
 and <sup>6</sup>where be all his miracles <sup>7</sup>which our fathers told us of,  
 saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt ? but now  
 the LORD hath <sup>8</sup>forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of  
 14 the Midianites. And the LORD looked upon him, and said, <sup>9</sup>Go  
 in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of  
 15 the Midianites : <sup>10</sup>have not I sent thee ? And he said unto him,  
 Oh my LORD, wherewith shall I save Israel ? behold, <sup>11</sup>my  
 family *is* poor in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's  
 16 house. And the LORD said unto him, <sup>12</sup>Surely I will be with  
 thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he  
 17 said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then  
 18 <sup>13</sup>shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. <sup>14</sup>Depart not hence,  
 I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my <sup>15</sup>present,  
 and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou  
 19 come again. ¶ And Gideon went in, and made ready <sup>16</sup>a kid,  
 and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour : the flesh he put in  
 a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought *it* out unto  
 20 him under the oak, and presented *it*. And the angel of God  
 said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and  
<sup>17</sup>lay them upon this rock, and <sup>18</sup>pour out the broth. And he did

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *to cause it to flee*.

*meanest* : Ex. 18. 21, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Or, *meat offering*.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *my thousand is the*

Mic. 5. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *a kid of the goats*.

<sup>1</sup> Josh. 17. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. 11.

32, called

*Gideon*.

<sup>3</sup> ch. 13. 3.

Luke 1. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Josh. 1. 5.

<sup>5</sup> So Ps. 69.

49.

Isai. 59. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ps. 44. 1.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Chr. 15. 2.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Sam. 12.

11.

Heb. 11. 32,

34.

<sup>9</sup> Josh. 1. 9.

ch. 4. 6.

<sup>10</sup> See

1 Sam. 9. 21.

<sup>11</sup> Ex. 3. 12.

Josh. 1. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Ex. 4. 1—8.

ver. 36. 37.

Ps. 86. 17.

Isai. 7. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Gen. 18. 3,

5.

ch. 13. 15.

<sup>14</sup> Gen. 18. 6.

<sup>15</sup> ch. 13. 19.

<sup>16</sup> See 1 Kin.

18. 33, 34.

the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh (Num. xxvi. 30).

12. *thou mighty man of valour*] Known to God to be such, though as yet not known to be such either by himself or his countrymen (cp. Luke i. 28, 30).

13. The extreme bitterness of the national sufferings under the Midianite occupation breaks out in Gideon's language. The Angel's words, suitable to times of prosperity, seemed to be a mockery, when it was evident the Lord was not with them. (Cp. Deut. xxxi. 17.)

14. *the Lord looked upon him*] That gracious look conferred immediate strength (cp. Ephes. vi. 10; 2 Cor. xii. 9; John xx. 22; Acts iii. 6). The change of phrase from "the angel of the Lord" to "the Lord" is remarkable. When messages are delivered by the Angel of the Lord, the form of the message is as if God Himself were speaking (cp. ii. 1).

The sending implied a valid commission and sufficient powers. Cp. Exod. iii. 10; Isai. xlv. 26; Ezek. ii. 3; Zech. ii. 11; Mal. iii. 1; Luke x. 3; John xx. 21; and the term APOSTLE, as applied to our Lord (Heb. iii. 1) and to the Twelve.

15. Gideon now perceived that the Lord was speaking to him by His angel. He saw, however, no qualifications in himself, or in his family or tribe, for the office of

saviour to his people. He therefore desires some assurance that the message he had just received was indeed from God, and not a mere dream or delusion. He asks as a sign (v. 18) that his mysterious visitor should tarry under the oak till he should return to Him with his gifts and offerings.

17. *a sign*] If the Angel ate of Gideon's present it would be a conclusive proof of the reality of the vision. (Cp. John xxi. 9—13; Luke xxiv. 37—43; Acts x. 41.) It would also be a token of God's goodwill to Gideon. Cp. Gen. xviii. 3.

18. *my present*] My Minchah : the word used regularly, though not exclusively, for the meat and drink offering (Lev. ii. 1 note). Its double sense of an offering to God, and of a gift to man, suits the doubt in Gideon's mind as to who his visitor might be.

19. *unleavened cakes*] As being much more quickly baked (cp. Gen. xix. 3) [and as connected with the meat offering]. *An ephah*, containing 3 measures, was the quantity of flour commonly used at one baking (Gen. xviii. 6; Ex. xvi. 16).

*presented it*] A word especially, though not exclusively, proper for offerings to God. See Amos v. 25, where the same word is rendered *offered*.

20. *pour out the broth*] Libations were a very ancient form of offering (cp. Gen. xxxv. 14). The drink offerings of wine

- 21 so. Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that *was* in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and <sup>1</sup>there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. ¶ And when Gideon <sup>2</sup>perceived that he *was* an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! <sup>3</sup>for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.
- 22 And the LORD said unto him, <sup>4</sup>Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it <sup>5</sup>Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet <sup>6</sup>in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites. ¶ And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, <sup>7</sup>even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and <sup>8</sup>cut down the grove that is by it: and build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this <sup>9</sup>rock, <sup>10</sup>in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night.
- 23 ¶ And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that *was* by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that *was* built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that *was* by it. And Joash said

<sup>1</sup> That is, *The Lord* send peace. Ex. 17. 15. Jer.

33. 16. Ezek. 48. 35.  
<sup>2</sup> Or, and.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *strong place*.

<sup>4</sup> Or, in an orderly manner.

under the Levitical law were poured upon the Altar (Ex. xxx. 9). The pouring of the broth upon the rock was evidently of the nature of a libation. It might also, like the water poured by Elijah upon his sacrifice, make the miracle of the fire that consumed the sacrifice more apparent. (Cp. 1 K. xviii. 33.)

22. *Alas, O Lord God!* Cp. Josh. vii. 7. *because I have seen an angel of the LORD* Cp. marg. reff., in which the notion that it was death for mortal man to see God appears clearly. The same notion prevailed amongst the heathen.

24. Gideon's naming the altar which he built, in commemoration of the words of peace spoken by the Angel, is very similar to what we read of Abraham (Gen. xxi. 14). and of Moses (Ex. xvii. 15), when he named the altar *Jehovah-nissi*.

25. *even* Rather, as in the margin, *and*. Two bullocks are spoken of. The labour of both would be required for pulling down and removing the altar of Baal, and for bringing the materials for building the Altar of Jehovah.

*the grove by it* Rather, "the idol upon

it," the Asherah, the wooden image of Astarte (iii. 7).

26. *in the ordered place* See marg. "Build an altar, &c., with the materials," "the wood laid in order" (cp. Gen. xxii. 9), that, viz., which he would find ready to hand in the altar of Baal which he was to throw down.

*the wood of the grove* "The (blocks of) wood of the idol," i.e. the image of Astarte. The command from God Himself to build an Altar, and sacrifice upon it, is analogous to Elijah's sacrifice (1 K. xviii.), and was doubtless caused by the extraordinary circumstance of the defection of the Israelites from the worship of the true God. Possibly, too, the Midianite invasion had made the worship at Shiloh impossible at this time.

27. The mention of the "men of the city" by the side of Gideon's "father's household" suggests the probability of their being a remnant of the Canaanite population, and the special patrons of Baal-worship.

31. From the boldness of Joash in defending his son, it is likely that the majority of the Abi-ezrites sided with him against "the

unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. Therefore on that day he called him <sup>1</sup>Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar. ¶ Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in <sup>2</sup>the valley of Jezreel. But <sup>3</sup>the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abi-ezer was gathered after him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. ¶ And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringing the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

**CHAP. 7. THEN** Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 12.

<sup>2</sup> 11.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Sam. 11.

<sup>4</sup> 21, Jerub-

<sup>5</sup> besheth;

<sup>6</sup> that is,

<sup>7</sup> Let the

<sup>8</sup> shameful

<sup>9</sup> thing

<sup>10</sup> plead.

<sup>11</sup> See Jer. 11.

<sup>12</sup> 13.

<sup>13</sup> Hos. 9. 10.

<sup>14</sup> ver. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Josh. 17.

<sup>16</sup> 16.

<sup>17</sup> ch. 3. 10.

<sup>18</sup> 1 Chr. 12. 18.

<sup>19</sup> 2 Chr. 21. 20.

<sup>20</sup> Num. 10. 3.

<sup>21</sup> ch. 3. 27.

<sup>22</sup> See Ex. 4.

<sup>23</sup> 3, 4, 6, 7.

<sup>24</sup> Gen. 18.

<sup>25</sup> 32.

<sup>26</sup> ch. 6. 32.

<sup>1</sup> That is, Let Baal plead.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. clothed.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. was called after him.

men of the city," and already felt drawn towards Gideon as their national and religious leader (v. 34). Joash appears as the chief magistrate of Ophrah.

Will ye plead, &c. I will ye save? The emphasis is upon ye, as much as to say, What business is it of yours?

32. he called him] i.e. "He was called" Jerubbaal, as being the person against whom it was popularly said that Baal might strive. See marg.

33. A fresh invasion, and the last, of Midianites, Amalekites, and Arabs (see v. 3). But the Israelites, instead of hiding in dens and caves, and tamely leaving all their substance as plunder to the invaders, now rally round their leader.

34. the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon] See marg. The word contains a striking thought. It is different from that used in the case of Othniel (iii. 10), Jephthah (xi. 29), and Samson (xiii. 25, xiv. 6, 19).

35. His own tribe, Manasseh, and the three northern tribes of Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali hastened to join him. Issachar was probably unable to do so, because the Midianites were encamped in the heart of their country. Asher no longer "abode in his breaches," as in the time of Jabin

(v. 17), perhaps ashamed of their former backwardness, and stung by the rebuke of Deborah; perhaps, too, from feeling the Midianite yoke much more galling than that of Jabin.

36. The caution of Gideon, desirous of being assured that he really had a promise from God, does not imply doubts as to God's faithfulness or power to fulfil His promise. Of such doubts there is not a trace in Gideon's character. He is a worthy example of faith (Heb. xi. 32).

37. The threshing-floors were and still are under the open air, and usually circular. The second sign (v. 40), would be more convincing than the former, because it is the nature of fleeces to attract and retain moisture.

VII. 1. the well of Harod] i.e. of trembling, evidently so called from the people who were afraid (v. 3). It is identified with great probability with *Ain Jalud*, a spacious pool at the foot of Gilboa; [by Conder, with *Ain el Jem'ain* (the spring of the two troops)].

Moreh was, probably, the little Hermon, the Jebel ed-Duh of the Arabs, which encloses the plain two or three miles north of Gilboa, which shuts it in on the south.

<sup>a</sup> Deut. 8. 17.  
Isai. 10. 13.  
<sup>1</sup> Cor. 1. 20.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. 4. 7.  
<sup>c</sup> Deut. 20. 8.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. 14.  
<sup>u</sup>.

<sup>e</sup> Gen. 40. 2.  
<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> ver. 13, 14,  
15.  
See Gen. 24.  
14.  
<sup>1</sup> Sam. 14.  
<sup>u</sup>, 10.  
<sup>g</sup> ch. 6. 5, 33,  
& 8, 10.

2 side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel <sup>b</sup>vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore, go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten <sup>4</sup>thousand. ¶ And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, *that* of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, this shall not go with thee, the <sup>5</sup>same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his <sup>6</sup>knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink <sup>7</sup>water. And the LORD said unto Gideon, 'By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto <sup>8</sup>his place. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all *the rest* of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of <sup>9</sup>Midian was beneath him in the valley. ¶ And it came to pass the same *night*, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. <sup>10</sup>But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: and thou shalt <sup>11</sup>hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the <sup>12</sup>outside of the *armed* men that *were* in the host. And the Midianites and the Amalekites and <sup>u</sup>all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the sea <sup>13</sup>side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, *there* was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it

<sup>1</sup> Or, *ranks by file*, Ex. 13. 18.

3. The proclamation was in accordance with the Law (see marg. ref.). No mountain of the name of Gilead is known in this locality, and it has been conjectured that the right reading is Gilboa. Others think that this may be a form of proclamation customary in Manasseh.

4. *try*] The word used for refining metals by separating the dross from the pure ore. They who threw themselves on the ground and drank freely were the more self-indulgent; while they who, remembering the near presence of the enemy, slaked their thirst with moderation, and without being off their guard for an instant, were the true soldiers of the army of God.

8. The sense is, "And they (the three hundred) took the victuals and trumpets of the people (*all the people* of v. 7) into their hands," so that each of the three hundred should have a trumpet and a pitcher.

11. *the armed men*] The word is rendered *harnessed* in Ex. xiii. 18 (see note). The most probable meaning of the word is *arrayed in divisions or ranks*.

13. *a cake of barley bread*] *i.e.* such a cake as could hardly be eaten by men, it was so vile: a term expressive of the contempt of the Midianites for the people of Israel.

*a tent*] The *tent*, meaning, probably, the tent of the king of Midian, or of the captain of the host.



14 fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. ¶ And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put <sup>a</sup>a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and <sup>b</sup>lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. ¶ So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch: and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *withal*: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. And they <sup>c</sup>stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host run, and cried, and fled. And the three hundred <sup>d</sup>blew the trumpets, and the LORD set <sup>e</sup>every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the <sup>f</sup>border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath. ¶ And the

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *the breaking thereof*.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *trumpets in the hand of all of them*.

<sup>3</sup> Or, *firebrands, or, torches*.

<sup>4</sup> Or, *toward*.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. *tip*.

<sup>6</sup> Ex. 14. 13.

<sup>7</sup> 14.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Kin. 7. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Josh. 6. 1.

<sup>10</sup> See 2 Cor. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Ps. 83. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Isai. 9. 4.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Sam. 14.

<sup>14</sup> 20.

<sup>15</sup> 2 Chr. 20. 23.

14. *This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon* The word rendered tumbled in v. 13, is rather descriptive of a sword brandished (cp. Gen. iii. 24). Hence the interpretation "the sword of Gideon." Hearing this dream and the interpretation would convince Gideon that he was indeed under the guidance of God, and so assure him of God's aid; and secondly, it would show him that a panic had already fallen upon the mind of the enemy.

16. Gideon himself took the command of one company, and sent the other two under their respective captains to different sides of the camp (rr. 18 and 21).

19. *the middle watch* The old Jewish division of the night was three watches of four hours each. They are alluded to in Ex. xiv. 24; 1 Sam. xi. 11; Ps. lxiii. 6, xc. 4, cxix. 148, cxxx. 6; Lam. ii. 19. After the Jews fell under the power of the Romans, they used the Roman division of four watches of three hours each (Matt. xiv. 25; Mark xiii. 35).

"The beginning" of the watch would be about eleven o'clock at night.

21. The effect to the Midianites would be, that they were surrounded by a mighty host. Their own camp being in darkness,

as soon as the confusion of flight began they would mistake friends for foes, and flee for pursuers. When once fighting had begun by the first casual mistake, the clashing of swords and the shouts of the combatants in the camp, accompanied by the continuous blowing of Gideon's trumpets outside, would make it appear that the whole of the enemy was in the camp. Suspicion of treachery on the part of their allies would also be likely to arise in the minds of Midianites, Amalekites, and Arabs. Cp. a similar scene in marg. ref.

22. *Beth-shittah*—"House of the acacias," the same trees which gave their name to *Shittim* (Num. xxxiii. 49) in the plains of Moab, and which grew plentifully also in the peninsula of Sinai (Ex. xxv. 5)—perhaps *Shuttah*, in the valley of Jezreel; or it may be another name of Scythopolis, or Beth-shan (cp. 1 K. iv. 12). *Zererath* or *Zeredath*, near Succoth (viii. 5), the same as *Zeredah* in Ephraim, the birth-place of Jeroboam (1 K. xi. 26), and *Zartamah* (1 K. iv. 12). *Abel-meholah* (field of the dance), the birth-place of Elisha (1 K. xix. 16) is in the Jordan valley, 10 miles from Scythopolis, if identified with Bethmaela: if the same as Abelmnea, it lay between

- men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after  
 24 the Midianites. And Gideon sent messengers throughout all  
 " ch. 3. 27. "mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and  
 " ch. 3. 23. " took the waters unto " Beth-barah and Jordan. And they took  
 " John 1. 23. " two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew  
 " ch. 8. 3. Oreb upon " the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress  
 " Ps. 83. 11. of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb  
 " Isai. 10. 20. and Zeeb to Gideon on the " other side Jordan.  
 " ch. 8. 4. " **CHAP. 8.** AND " the men of Ephraim said unto him, 'Why hast  
 " Secch. 12. 1. thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest  
 2 Sam. 10. 41. to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him  
 2 " sharply. And he said unto them, What have I done now in  
 comparison of you? Is not the gleanings of the grapes of  
 " ch. 7. 21. 3 Ephraim better than the vintage of *Abi-ezer*? " God hath  
 Phil. 2. 3. delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and  
 " Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then  
 " Prov. 15. 1. their " anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.  
 4 ¶ And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the  
 " Gen. 33. 17. three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing  
 " Ps. 60. 6. 5 them. And he said unto the men of " Succoth, Give, I pray  
 you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for  
 " See 1 Kin. 20. 11. they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna,  
 " See 1 Sam. 25. 11. 6 kings of Midian. And the princes of Succoth said, 'Are the  
 hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that " we  
 7 should give bread unto thine army? And Gideon said, There-  
 fore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into  
 " vor. 10. mine hand, " then I will " tear your flesh with the thorns of the  
 " Gen. 32. 30. 8 wilderness and with briars. And he went up thence " to Penueel,  
 1 Kin. 12. 25. and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penueel answered  
 9 him as the men of Succoth had answered him. And he spake

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *What thing is this thou hast done unto us.*

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *strongly.*

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *thresh.*

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *spirit.*

Nablous and Scythopolis. [But see 1 K. xix. 16 note.] *Tabbath* was apparently lower down the Jordan valley, i.e. further south.

24. *the waters*] The streams which run from the mountain district of Ephraim into the Jordan in the district of Beth-shan, forming great pools and marshes, which the Midianites fleeing south would have to cross before they could reach the Jordan fords.

*all the men of Ephraim*] They had taken no previous part in the rising against Midian: nor had Gideon, of the smaller tribe of Manasseh, presumed before to summon his more powerful and arrogant brethren of the great tribe of Ephraim (see Josh. xvii. 14-18).

VIII. 1. The success of Gideon's enterprise mortified the pride of Ephraim, as the chief tribe, seeing that they had played a subordinate part. Cp. Judg. xii. 1.

2. A civil war with the great tribe of Ephraim would soon have turned Israel's victory into mourning. Gideon therefore

sooths their wounded pride by confessing that Ephraim had done more, though they had joined him so late in the day, than he had been able to effect in the whole campaign. The grape-gleaning of Ephraim was better than the whole vintage of Abi-ezer.

5. Succoth was in the tribe of Gad which was entirely trans-Jordanic (Josh. xiii. 27); and the ruins are at Sukkot, on the east of Jordan, a little south of Beth-shan.

*Give, I pray you, &c.*] Gideon might fairly expect so much aid from the trans-Jordanic tribes, and from so considerable a town as Succoth (r. 14).

6. The number of the followers of Zebah and Zalmunna was still so formidable, and Gideon's enterprise still so doubtful, that the men of Succoth (being on the same side of the Jordan) would not risk the vengeance of the Midianites by giving supplies to Gideon's men.

8. Succoth was in the valley or Ghor of the Jordan (r. 5), and Penueel apparently

- also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in  
 10 peace, <sup>1</sup>I will break down this tower. ¶ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of <sup>1</sup>all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell <sup>1</sup>an hundred and twenty thousand men  
 11 that drew sword. And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of <sup>2</sup>Nobah and Jogbehah, and  
 12 smote the host: for the host was <sup>2</sup>secure. And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and <sup>2</sup>took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and <sup>2</sup>discomfited all the host.  
 13 ¶ And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the  
 14 sun was up, and caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him: and he <sup>2</sup>described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen  
 15 men. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did <sup>2</sup>upbraid me, saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that  
 16 we should give bread unto thy men that are weary? <sup>2</sup>And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and  
 17 briers, and with them he <sup>2</sup>taught the men of Succoth. <sup>2</sup>And he beat down the tower of <sup>2</sup>Penuel, and slew the men of the city.  
 18 ¶ Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at <sup>2</sup>Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one <sup>2</sup>resembled the children of  
 19 a king. And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as the LORD liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I

<sup>1</sup> Or, an hundred and twenty thousand, every one drawing a sword, ch. 20. 2, 15,

17, 25. <sup>2</sup> Kin. 3. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. terrified.  
<sup>3</sup> Heb. writ.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. made to know.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. according to the form, &c.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kin. 22.

<sup>2</sup> 27.

<sup>3</sup> ver. 17.

<sup>4</sup> ch. 7. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Num. 32.

35, 42.

<sup>6</sup> ch. 18. 27.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Thes. 5. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ps. 83. 11.

<sup>9</sup> ver. 6.

<sup>10</sup> ver. 7.

<sup>11</sup> ver. 9.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Kin. 12.

25.

<sup>13</sup> ch. 4. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Ps. 80. 12.

in the mountain. No identification of Penuel has taken place. It was south of the brook Jabbok, and on Jacob's way to Succoth. Gideon, journeying in the opposite direction to Jacob, comes from Succoth to Penuel.

10. Zebah and Zalmunna seem to have fled nearly due east to Karkor, which was probably an enclosure of some kind (perhaps a walled sheepfold, cp. Num. xxxi. 32 note). Its site is unknown; but it was near Nobah, in the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead (Num. xxxii. 40), and Jogbehah was in the tribe of Gad (ib. 34, 35). Gideon, perhaps taking a circuit so as to come upon them from the east, fell suddenly upon them, apparently at night, surprised them, and smote them.

13. *before the sun was up*] The translation of the words is doubtful, because of the rarity of the word rendered "sun" (*Heres*; cp. ii. 9 note). Many suppose it to be the name of a mountain pass, and render it *from the ascent of Heres*.

14. The written (see marg.) list would enable Gideon to punish the guilty and spare the innocent people. Succoth was governed by a sanhedrim or council of *seventy elders* (cp. Num. xi. 16), with perhaps seven others of superior rank called *princes*.

16. *he taught*] Thought to be a false read-

ing, for "he threshed," as in *ε. 7* marg.

17. *the men of the city*] Perhaps the rulers; who, it is likely, had possession of the tower or citadel, and so could tyrannize over the people. Gideon slew the great men, and beat down their towers, but did not injure the inhabitants.

18. *what manner of men*] Lit. "Where are the men?" The sense, *what manner of men*, is merely gathered from the tenor of the answer. Gideon doubtless knew that his brethren had been killed by Zebah and Zalmunna, and the desire of avenging their death was one motive for his impetuous pursuit and attack. His question was rather a taunt, a bitter reproach to his captives, preparing them for their fate. Zebah and Zalmunna, in their answer, did not give evidence against themselves. Their hope was by a flattering answer to soothe Gideon's wrath.

19. *the sons of my mother*] A much closer relation than that of brothers by the father only. (Cp. Gen. xliii. 29; Deut. xiii. 6; Ps. lxxix. 8). This is the only hint preserved of the transaction. We cannot say exactly when the slaughter of Gideon's brethren on Mount Tabor took place, whether before the outbreak of the war (vi. 33), or in the retreat and flight of the Midianites (vii. 22).

- 20 would not slay you. And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he *was* yet a youth. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man *is*, so *is* his strength. And Gideon arose, and <sup>a</sup>slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the <sup>a</sup>ornaments that *were* on their camels' necks.
- <sup>a</sup> Ps. 83. 11. 22 ¶ Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: <sup>a</sup>the LORD shall rule over you. ¶ And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, <sup>b</sup>because they *were* Ishmaelites.) And they answered, We will willingly give *them*. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey. And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred *shekels* of gold; beside ornaments, and <sup>c</sup>collars, and purple raiment that *was* on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that *were* about their camels' necks. And Gideon <sup>d</sup>made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, *even* <sup>e</sup>in Ophrah: and all Israel <sup>f</sup>went thither a whoring after it: which thing became <sup>g</sup>a snare unto Gideon, and to his house. ¶ Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. <sup>h</sup>And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon. And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. And Gideon had <sup>i</sup>threescore and ten sons <sup>j</sup>of his body begotten: for he had many wives. <sup>k</sup>And his concubine that *was* in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he <sup>l</sup>called Abimelech. And Gideon the
- <sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. 8. 7. & 10. 19. & 12. 12.  
<sup>b</sup> Gen. 25. 13.  
<sup>c</sup> 37. 25, 26.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. 17. 5.  
<sup>e</sup> ch. 6. 24.  
<sup>f</sup> Ps. 106. 39.  
<sup>g</sup> Deut. 7. 16.  
<sup>h</sup> ch. 5. 31. & 1. 2.  
<sup>i</sup> ch. 9. 2, 5.  
<sup>j</sup> ch. 9. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Or, ornaments like the moon.

<sup>2</sup> Or, sweet jewels.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. going out of his thigh.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. set.

20. It was Gideon's place to act the part of the "avenger of blood" (Num. xxxv. 12; Deut. xix. 6). The fierce manners of the age break out in the slaying of the captives (cp. 1 Sam. xv. 32, 33), and in Gideon's attempt to initiate his youthful son Jether in the stern work of slaying his country's enemies.

21. *the ornaments*] See marg. and cp. Isai. iiii. 18. The custom of adorning the necks of their camels with gold chains and ornaments prevailed among the Arabs so late as the time of Mahomet.

24. In this desire for gold Gideon falls to the level of ordinary men, and we may see in it the final decline of his glory, leading to a sad tarnishing of the lustre of his bright name. The idolatrous honour paid to Gideon's ephod was probably a source of revenue to his house. Contrast the conduct of Abraham (Gen. xiv. 21-23), and of Elisha (2 K. v. 16, 26).

The *ear-ring* here mentioned is properly a *nose-ring* (cp. Gen. xxiv. 22 note). The custom of wearing nose-rings prevails in Eastern countries to the present day. The circumstance of Job's friends each contributing a nose-ring of gold (Job xlii. 11 note)

is a remarkable parallel to the incident in Gideon's history. Rings of gold were also used as money in Egypt, as appears on several early monuments, and by the Celts.

25. *they spread, &c.*] The LXX. reads "He spread his garment."

26. If the Ishmaelite nose-rings were half a shekel in weight, then 1,700 shekels weight of gold implied that 3,400 persons wearing gold rings had been slain. The "collars" were rather "ear-drops."

27. The ephod was that particular part of the High-Priest's dress which was necessary to be worn when he inquired of God by Urim and Thummim. It seems that Gideon being now the civil ruler, desired to have an ephod of his own, kept in his own city, to be worn by the priest whenever Gideon might summon him to inquire of the Lord for him. His relations with the tribe of Ephraim probably made him unwilling to resort to Shiloh. Cp. the act of Jeroboam (1 K. xii. 28).

31. Abimelech's mother was not reckoned among the wives, being, probably, one of the Canaanite population in Shechem (ix. 28): neither was Abimelech himself reck-

son of Joash died <sup>a</sup>in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, <sup>b</sup>in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.

33 ¶ And it came to pass, <sup>c</sup>as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and <sup>d</sup>went <sup>e</sup>a whoring after

34 Baalim, <sup>f</sup>and made Baal-berith their god. And the children of Israel <sup>g</sup>remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side:

35 <sup>h</sup>neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, <sup>i</sup>namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.

**CHAP. 9. AND Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem** unto <sup>a</sup>his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with

2 all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, <sup>b</sup>Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, <sup>c</sup>which are

<sup>d</sup>threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I <sup>e</sup>am <sup>f</sup>your bone and your flesh.

3 And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words: and their hearts inclined <sup>g</sup>to

4 follow Abimelech; for they said, He <sup>h</sup>is our <sup>i</sup>brother. And they gave him threescore and ten <sup>j</sup>pieces of silver out of the house of

<sup>k</sup>Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech hired <sup>l</sup>vain and light per-

5 sons, which followed him. And he went unto his father's house

<sup>m</sup>at Ophrah, and <sup>n</sup>slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, <sup>o</sup>being

threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid

6 himself. And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Abimelech king, <sup>p</sup>by

7 the plain of the pillar that <sup>q</sup>was in Shechem. ¶ And when they told <sup>r</sup>it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of <sup>s</sup>mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them,

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *What is good?*  
*whether, &c.*

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *after.*

<sup>3</sup> Or, *by the oak of the pillar:* See Josh. 24. 26.

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 25. 8.  
Job 5. 20.  
<sup>b</sup> ver. 27.  
ch. 6. 24.  
<sup>c</sup> ch. 2. 19  
<sup>d</sup> ch. 2. 17.  
<sup>e</sup> ch. 9. 4, 10.  
<sup>f</sup> Ps. 78. 11.  
-32.  
<sup>g</sup> 106. 13.  
<sup>h</sup> ch. 9. 16.  
Eccles. 9.  
14, 15.

<sup>h</sup> ch. 8. 31.

<sup>h</sup> ch. 8. 30.  
<sup>i</sup> Gen. 29.  
14.

<sup>j</sup> Gen. 20.  
15.  
<sup>k</sup> ch. 8. 33.  
<sup>l</sup> ch. 11. 3.  
<sup>m</sup> 2 Chr. 13. 7.  
Prov. 12. 11.  
Acts 17. 5.  
<sup>n</sup> ch. 6. 24.  
<sup>o</sup> 2 Kin. 11.  
1, 2.

<sup>p</sup> Deut. 11.  
20.  
Josh. 8. 33.  
John 3. 20.

oned with the seventy other sons of Jerubbaal (ix. 24. Cp. xi. 1, 2).

33. *turned again*] Doubtless Gideon himself had no doubt prepared the way for this apostacy by his unauthorised ephod. The Law of Moses, with its strict unity of priesthood and Altar, was the divinely-appointed and only effectual preservative from idolatry.

*Baal-bereth*] The god of covenants or sworn treaties, corresponding to the Zeus Orkios of the Greeks. The centre of this fresh apostacy was at Shechem.

IX. 1. We are not told how soon after the death of Gideon these events happened. There must have been time for the apostacy and establishment of Baal-worship, and for the development of ill-will between Abimelech and his brethren.

2. *the men of Shechem*] Lit., "the masters." Cp. Josh. xxiv. 11; 1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12.

3. The Ephraimite pride revolted from Abi-ezrite rulers, and inclined them to one who was a Shechemite by birth. (Cp. the same spirit in the time of David and Rehoboam, 2 Sam. xx. 1; 1 K. xii. 16.)

5. Such wholesale slaughters have always been common in Eastern monarchies, and

are among the fruits of polygamy.

6. Millo must have been a fortified place close to, but separate from, Shechem, and perhaps the same as the tower of Shechem mentioned in *rr.* 46, 47. The building or enlarging of the better-known Millo at Jerusalem was one of Solomon's great works (1 K. ix. 15, 24). The population dwelling in Millo though perhaps numerically small, had great weight from possessing the stronghold. Their giving Abimelech the title of *king* indicates the strong Canaanite influence at Shechem. All the Canaanite chiefs were called *kings*, but it was a title hitherto unknown in Israel. This title had not been named by those Israelites who offered to make Gideon their hereditary ruler (viii. 22, 23).

*the plain of the pillar, &c.*] Rather "*the oak of the garrison which is in Shechem.*" The oak in question was probably called the "garrison oak," from a garrison being stationed near it.

7. *the top of Mount Gerizim*] The ancient Shechem was perhaps situated there. The population of Shechem is supposed to have been keeping some public festival outside the city when Jotham addressed them.

\* See 2 Kin.  
14. 9.  
1 ch. 8. 22,  
23.  
\*\* Ps. 104.  
15.

\* Ps. 104.  
15.

o Isai. 30. 2.  
Dan. 4. 12.  
Hos. 14. 7.  
p vor. 20.  
Num. 21. 23.  
Ezek. 10. 14.  
q 2 Kin. 14. 9.  
r Ps. 104. 16.  
s ch. 8. 33.  
\* ver. 5, 6.

t Isai. 8. 6.  
Phil. 3. 3.  
u vor. 15, 56,  
57.  
v 2 Sam. 20.  
14.  
w 1 Sam. 16.  
14.  
x 18. 9, 10.  
Isai. 19. 2.  
14.  
y Isai. 33. 1.  
z 1 Kin. 2. 32.  
Esth. 9. 25.  
Ps. 7. 16.  
Matt. 23. 35,  
38.

Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken  
8 unto you. <sup>a</sup>The trees went forth *on a time* to anoint a king  
over them; and they said unto the olive tree, 'Reign thou over  
9 us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fat-  
ness, <sup>b</sup>wherewith by me they honour God and man, and 'go to  
10 be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree,  
11 Come thou, *and* reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them,  
Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be  
12 promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine,  
13 Come thou, *and* reign over us. And the vine said unto them,  
Should I leave my wine, <sup>c</sup>which cheereth God and man, and go  
14 to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the  
15 <sup>b</sup>bramble, Come thou, *and* reign over us. And the bramble said  
unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, *then*  
come *and* put your trust in my <sup>c</sup>shadow: and if not, <sup>d</sup>let fire  
come out of the bramble, and devour the <sup>e</sup>cedars of Lebanon.  
16 Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye  
have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jo-  
rubbah and his house, and have done unto him <sup>f</sup>according to  
17 the deserving of his hands; (for my father fought for you, and  
<sup>g</sup>adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of  
18 Midian: <sup>h</sup>and ye are risen up against my father's house this  
day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons, upon  
one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidserv-  
ant, king over the men of Shechem, because he <sup>i</sup>is your brother;)   
19 if ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbah and with  
his house this day, *then* <sup>j</sup>rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him  
20 also rejoice in you: but if not, <sup>k</sup>let fire come out from Abimelech,  
and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo;  
and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the  
21 house of Millo, and devour Abimelech. And Jotham ran away,  
and fled, and went to <sup>l</sup>Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech  
22 his brother. ¶ When Abimelech had reigned three years  
23 over Israel, then <sup>m</sup>God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech  
and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem <sup>n</sup>dealt  
24 treacherously with Abimelech; <sup>o</sup>that the cruelty done to the  
threescore and ten sons of Jerubbah might come, and their

<sup>1</sup> Heb. go up and down for other trees.

<sup>2</sup> Or, thistle.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. cast his life.

8-20. This fable and that noted in the marg.ref. are the only two of the kind found in Scripture. Somewhat different are the parables of the O. T. 2 Sam. xii. 1-4, xiv. 6-11; 1 K. xx. 39, 40.

8. *honour God and man*] Alluding to the constant use of oil in the meat-offerings (Lev. ii. 1-16), and in the holy ointment (Ex. xxx. 24, 25). In like manner, the allusion in v. 13 is to the drink-offerings of wine. See Lev. xxiii. 13; Num. xv. 10.

14. *the bramble*] Said to be the Rhamnus Paliurus of Linnaeus, otherwise called Spina-Christi, or Christ's Thorn, a shrub with sharp thorns. The application is obvious. The noble Gideon and his worthy sons had declined the proffered kingdom. The vile, base-born Abimelech had accepted it, and his act would turn out to the mutual ruin of himself and his subjects.

15. *if in truth*] i.e. consistently with truth, honour, and uprightness, as explained in the interpretation in vv. 16 and 19.

*let fire come out, &c.*] The propriety of the image is strictly preserved, for even the thorns of the worthless bramble might kindle a flame which would burn the stately cedars to the ground. See Ps. lviii. 9.

16-20. These verses contain the interpretation of the fable. In them Jotham points out the base ingratitude of the people in raising Abimelech upon the ruin of Gideon's house, and foretells the retribution which would fall upon both parties.

22. *had reigned*] Rather, "had ruled." It is not the phrase used in v. 6. It looks as if the Shechemites alone had made him king, and the rest of Israel had submitted to his dominion, without allowing his title of king.

blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which <sup>1</sup>aided him in the killing  
 25 of his brethren. And the men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came  
 26 along that way by them: and it was told Abimelech. And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him.  
 27 And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode *the grapes*, and made <sup>2</sup>merry, and went into <sup>b</sup>the house of their god, and did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech. <sup>b</sup> ver. 4.  
 28 And Gaal the son of Ebed said, *Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? is not he the son of Jerubbaal?* and Zebul his officer? *serve the men of Hamor the*  
 29 *father of Shechem: for why should we serve him? And would to God this people were under my hand! then would I remove* <sup>c</sup> 1 Sam. 25.  
 Abimelech. And he said to Abimelech, *Increase thine army,* <sup>10.</sup>  
 30 and come out. ¶ And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard <sup>1</sup> Kin. 12. 16.  
 31 the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was <sup>d</sup> Gen. 34. 2.  
 32 kindled. And he sent messengers unto Abimelech <sup>e</sup> 2 Sam. 15.  
 33 *privily, saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren be come to Shechem; and, behold, they fortify the city against thee. Now therefore up by night, thou and the people that is with thee, and lie in wait in the field: and it shall be, that in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and, behold, when he and the people that is with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion.*  
 34 ¶ And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that *were* with him, by night, and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies.  
 35 And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech rose up, and the people that  
 36 *were* with him, from lying in wait. And when Gaal saw the

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *strengthened his hands to kill.*

<sup>2</sup> Or, *songs*: See Isai. 16. 9, 10. Jer. 25. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Or, *hot.*

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *craftily*, or, *to Tormah.*

<sup>5</sup> Heb. *as thine hand shall find*, 1 Sam. 10. 7. & 25. 8. Eccles. 9. 10.

28. It does not appear who Gaal, son of Ebed, was; he may have been an officer sent by Abimelech with a force to bring the men of Shechem back to their allegiance, but who tried to turn the rebellion to his own account. He got into Shechem with a band of men, "his brethren," unopposed by Zebul, Abimelech's officer, and soon gained the confidence of the Shechemites.

27-29. Seditious and lawless acts (vv. 25, 26) now broke out into open rebellion. It was at an idolatrous feast in the house of Baal-berith, on occasion of the vintage, and when they were excited with wine, that the rebellion was matured. Those present began to "curse Abimelech," to speak insultingly of him, and to revile him (cp. Lev. xx. 9; 2 Sam. xix. 21; Isai. viii. 21). Gaal, the son of Ebed, who was watching the opportunity, immediately incited them to revolt from the dominion of Abimelech, offering himself to be their captain; adding a message of defiance to Abimelech, ad-

ressed, probably, to Zebul, who was present but too weak to resent it on the spot.

27. *made merry*] The word translated *merry* occurs only here and in Lev. xix. 24. Its etymology gives the sense of *praises, thanksgivings*; and its use in these two passages rather indicates that the fruits themselves which were brought to the House of God with songs of praise, and eaten or drunken with religious service, were so called. The thank-offerings would be a portion of the new wine of the vintage which they had just gathered in.

28. Shechem is another designation of Abimelech. Shechem means the son and heir of Shechem, Abimelech's mother being a Canaanite (v. 18).

31. *privily*] See marg. The word is probably the name of a place in *Tormah*, some think the same as *Arumah* (v. 41). Zebul was faithful to Abimelech, but dissimulated his sentiments, from being too weak to oppose Gaal, till Abimelech came with his army (v. 38).

- people, he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest  
 37 the shadow of the mountains as if they were men. And Gaal spake again and said, See there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company come along by the plain of  
 38 Meonenim. Then said Zebul unto him, Where is now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? is not this the people that thou hast despised?  
 39 go out, I pray now, and fight with them. And Gaal went out  
 40 before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him, and many were overthrown and wounded, even unto the entering of the gate.  
 41 And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah: and Zebul thrust out Gaal  
 42 and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem. ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people went out into  
 43 the field; and they told Abimelech. And he took the people, and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and, behold, the people were come forth out of  
 44 the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them. And Abimelech, and the company that was with him, rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and the two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields,  
 45 and slew them. And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that were therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt. ¶ And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard that, they  
 47 entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith. And it was told Abimelech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. And Abimelech gat him up to mount  
 48 Zalmon, he and all the people that were with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid it on his shoulder, and said unto the people that were with him, What ye have seen me do, make  
 49 haste, and do as I have done. And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put them to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them; so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand

<sup>f</sup> ver. 23, 29.

<sup>v</sup> ver. 20.

<sup>h</sup> Deut. 29.

23.

<sup>1</sup> Kin. 12. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Kin. 3. 25.

<sup>1</sup> ch. 8. 33.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 68. 14.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *navel*.

<sup>2</sup> Or, *The regards of times*,  
Deut. 18. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *I have done*.

37. the plain of Meonenim] Translate "the oak of the soothsayers" (see marg.). Some well-known oak, so called, but which is not mentioned elsewhere.

42. After Gaal's expulsion, the people went out into the field, either to complete the vintage, or for some other agricultural operation. "They" (Zebul and his party) sent word of this to Abimelech.

44. This verse explains the purpose of both the present and the former division of Abimelech's forces into several companies, viz. that while some of the companies attacked the men of Shechem in the field, another company, starting from their ambush, might occupy the approach to the city gate, and so cut off their retreat.

45. sowed it with salt] Expressing by this

action his hatred, and his wish, that when utterly destroyed as a city, it might not even be a fruitful field. Salt is the emblem of barrenness (see marg. ref.).

46. an hold of the house of the god Berith] As combining the advantages of a sanctuary (cp. 1 K. ii. 28) and a fortress. The word rendered *hold* occurs elsewhere only in 1 Sam. xiii. 6, where it is rendered "high-place." Its exact signification is uncertain.

48. Zalmon] A lofty and thickly-wooded hill, as the etymology of the name (*shady*) implies, in the immediate neighbourhood of Shechem: perhaps the same as Ebal. The setting fire to the hold, where the men of Shechem were all crowded together, with their wives and children, was the literal fulfilment of Jotham's curse in v. 20.



50 men and women. ¶ Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and en-  
 51 camped against Thebez, and took it. But there was a strong  
 tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women,  
 and all they of the city, and shut it to them, and gat them up to  
 52 the top of the tower. And Abimelech came unto the tower, and  
 fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to  
 53 burn it with fire. And a certain woman 'cast a piece of a mill-  
 54 stone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his scull. Then  
 he called hastily unto the young man his armourbearer, and  
 said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not  
 55 of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him  
 through, and he died. And when the men of Israel saw that  
 Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place.  
 56 ¶ Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he  
 57 did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren: and all the  
 evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads:  
 and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

**CHAP. 10.** AND after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel  
 Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar;  
 2 and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. And he judged  
 Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in  
 3 Shamir. ¶ And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged  
 4 Israel twenty and two years. And he had thirty sons that  
 rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which  
 are called Havoth-jair unto this day, which are in the land  
 5, 6 of Gilead. And Jair died, and was buried in Camon. ¶ And  
 the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD,  
 and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria,  
 and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods  
 of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines,  
 7 and forsook the LORD, and served not him. And the anger of  
 the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. 11.

21.

<sup>m</sup> So 1 Sam.

31. 4.

<sup>a</sup> ver. 24.

Job 31. 3.

Ps. 94. 23.

Prov. 5. 22.

<sup>o</sup> ver. 20.<sup>a</sup> ch. 2. 16.<sup>b</sup> ch. 5. 10.

&amp; 12. 14.

<sup>c</sup> Deut. 3. 14.<sup>d</sup> ch. 2. 11.

&amp; 3. 7. &amp; 4.

1. &amp; 6. 1.

&amp; 13. 1.

<sup>e</sup> ch. 2. 13.

/ ch. 2. 12.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Kin. 11.

33.

Ps. 100. 36.

<sup>h</sup> ch. 2. 14.

1 Sam. 12. 9.

<sup>1</sup> Or, deliver.<sup>2</sup> Heb. save.<sup>3</sup> Or, the villages of Jair, Num. 32. 41.

50. The men of Thebez (modern Tubas) had, doubtless, joined the Shechemites in their rebellion against Abimelech.

52. *went hard unto the door, &c.* i.e. went close to the door. An act of manifest danger, seeing the roof was covered with persons who would be likely to throw down missiles of all sorts on the heads of their assailants. But the hatred of Abimelech, and his thirst for revenge, made him despise danger.

53. The phrase *all to* is now obsolete, and means quite, entirely, as in Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton.

X. 1. *defend*] The marginal reading "to deliver," is far preferable. The word is the same as in ii. 16, iii. 9, 15, 31, &c., and is the technical word applied to the judges. Cp. Neh. ix. 27 (*saviours who saved them*, A. V.).

The term *there arose*, also marks Tola as one of the Judges, properly so called, raised by Divine Providence.

*Tola and Puah*] Both names of heads of houses in the tribe of Issachar (1 Chr. vii. 1; Gen. xlvii. 13).

*Shamir*] Not the same as that mentioned in Josh. xv. 48, which was in the hill country

of Judah. Issachar would seem from this to have extended into the northern part of mount Ephraim.

2. *Jair the Gileadite* was probably the same person as is named in Num. xxxii. 41; Deut. iii. 14, as having given the name of *Havoth-jair* to certain villages in Bashan.

6. *the gods of Syria*] Or *Aram*. In the times of the Judges the various tribes of Aramites, or Syrians, were not compacted into one state, nor were they till after the time of Solomon. The national gods of these various Aramean tribes were probably the same; and their worship would be likely to be introduced into the trans-Jordanic tribes. It has been remarked that the Hebrew words for "to divine," "to practise magic," "idolrous priests," and other like words, are of Syrian origin. The Syriac ritual proved very attractive to king Ahaz (2 K. xvi. 10-12). For the national gods of the Zidonians, Moabites, Ammonites, and Philistines, see 1 K. xi. 5, 7, 33; 1 Sam. v. 2-5.

7. The previous mention of the Philistines as oppressors of Israel (iii. 31) seems to be restricted to the south of Judah, when they

- hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of 8 Ammon. And that year they vexed and <sup>1</sup>oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that *were* on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which *is* in 9 Gilead. Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against 10 the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed. ¶ And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, 11 and also served Baalim. And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, *Did not I deliver you* <sup>2</sup>from the Egyptians, and <sup>3</sup>from the Amorites, <sup>4</sup>from the children of Ammon, <sup>5</sup>and from the 12 Philistines? <sup>6</sup>The Zidonians also, <sup>7</sup>and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, <sup>8</sup>did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I 13 delivered you out of their hand. <sup>9</sup>Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. 14 Go and <sup>10</sup>cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them 15 deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: <sup>11</sup>do thou unto us whatsoever <sup>12</sup>seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we 16 pray thee, this day. "And they put away the "strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and <sup>13</sup>his soul <sup>14</sup>was 17 grieved for the misery of Israel. ¶ Then the children of Ammon were <sup>15</sup>gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped
- <sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 12. 10.  
<sup>2</sup> Ex. 14. 30.  
<sup>3</sup> Num. 21. 21, 24, 25.  
<sup>4</sup> ch. 3. 12, 13.  
<sup>5</sup> ch. 3. 31.  
<sup>6</sup> ch. 5. 10.  
<sup>7</sup> ch. 6. 33.  
<sup>8</sup> Ps. 106. 42, 43.  
<sup>9</sup> Deut. 32. 15.  
<sup>10</sup> Jer. 2. 13.  
<sup>11</sup> Deut. 32. 37, 38.  
<sup>12</sup> Kin. 3. 13.  
<sup>13</sup> Jer. 2. 28.  
<sup>14</sup> 1 Sam. 3. 18.  
<sup>15</sup> 2 Sam. 15. 26.  
<sup>16</sup> 2 Chr. 7. 14, & 15. 8.  
<sup>17</sup> Jer. 18. 7, 8.  
<sup>18</sup> Ps. 106. 44, 45.  
<sup>19</sup> Isai. 63. 9.
- <sup>1</sup> Heb. *crushed*.  
<sup>2</sup> Heb. *is good in thine eyes*.  
<sup>3</sup> Heb. *gods of strangers*.  
<sup>4</sup> Heb. *was shortened*.  
<sup>5</sup> Heb. *cried together*.

co-operated with Moab. They appear to have gradually increased in power till they reached their height in the time of Saul. In the present instance they were probably in alliance with the Ammonites, holding the western tribes in check, while the Ammonites subdued those on the east of Jordan.

8. *that year*] Perhaps the closing year of the oppression, when the Ammonites passed over the Jordan. For it was this crowning oppression which brought the Israelites to repentance (rv. 10, 15, 16), and so prepared the way for the deliverance. Possibly in the original narrative from which this portion of the Book of Judges is compiled, "that year" was defined.

*the land of the Amorites*] Viz. of Sihon king of the Amorites, Num. xxi. 21; Deut. i. 4; Josh. xiii. 10; Ps. cxxxv. 11.

11. (See marg. ref.). The Israelites were delivered from the *Egyptians* at the Exodus; from the *Amorites* in the victories over Sihon, and Og, and the five kings of the Amorites (Josh. x. 5); from the *children of Ammon* by Ehud; and from the *Philistines*, by the hand of Shamgar (cp. 1 Sam. xii. 9).

12. *the Zidonians*] An allusion to the time of Barak, when the Zidonians doubtless formed part of the great confederacy of Canaanites under Jabin king of Hazor. See Josh. xi. 8.

*the Amalekites*] In the time of Gideon (marg. ref.).

*the Maonites*] Probably one of the tribes of the "children of the East," who came with the Midianites and Amalekites in the time of Gideon, and may have been conspicuous for their hostility to Israel, and for the greatness of their discomfiture, though the record has not been preserved. The name is *Mehunims* in 2 Chr. xxvi. 7.

17. The historian, having related the preliminary incidents, now comes to the final issue which forms the subject matter of his narrative. On a certain occasion, as on many previous ones, the Ammonites were encamped in Gilead, with the intention of dispossessing the Israelites of the whole country, or at least as far as the river Jabbok (xi. 13), and of invading the West-Jordanic tribes. The children of Israel on the East of Jordan assembled together to resist them, and pitched their camp in Mizpeh. The narrative proceeds to detail what happened.

*Mizpeh*, as its name, "watch-tower" or "look-out" indicates, was situated on a height of Mount Gilead, and was, as such, a strong post. It is almost always written, "THE Mizpeh," or watch-tower. Four or five places of the name occur in Scripture.

18 in <sup>1</sup>Mizpeh. And the people *and* princes of Gilead said one to another, What man *is he* that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall <sup>2</sup>be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

**CHAP. 11.** NOW <sup>a</sup>Jephthah the Gileadite was <sup>b</sup>a mighty man of valour, and he *was* the son of <sup>1</sup>an harlot: and Gilead begat <sup>2</sup>Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou *art* the son of a strange woman. Then Jephthah fled <sup>2</sup>from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered <sup>4</sup>vain <sup>4</sup>men to Jephthah, and went out with him. ¶ And it came to pass <sup>3</sup>in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war <sup>5</sup>against Israel. And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch <sup>6</sup>Jephthah out of the land of Tob: and they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the <sup>7</sup>children of Ammon. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, <sup>d</sup>Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in dis- <sup>8</sup>trese? <sup>e</sup>And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we <sup>f</sup>turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be <sup>9</sup>our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver them before me, shall I <sup>10</sup>be your head? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, <sup>h</sup>The LORD <sup>i</sup>be witness between us, if we do not so according to <sup>11</sup>thy words. Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him <sup>i</sup>head and captain over them: and Jeph- <sup>12</sup>thah uttered all his words <sup>k</sup>before the LORD in Mizpeh. ¶ And

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *a woman an harlot.*

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *after days.*

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *be the hearer between us.*

<sup>h</sup> Heb. *from the face.*

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 31. 49. ch. 11. 11, 29.

<sup>b</sup> ch. 11. 8, 11.

<sup>c</sup> Heb. 11. 32, called *Jephthah.*

<sup>d</sup> ch. 6. 12. <sup>2</sup> Kin. 5. 1.

<sup>e</sup> ch. 9. 4. <sup>1</sup> Sam. 22. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Gen. 20. 27.

<sup>e</sup> ch. 10. 18.

<sup>f</sup> Luke 17. 4.

<sup>g</sup> ch. 10. 18.

<sup>h</sup> Jer. 42. 5.

<sup>i</sup> ver. 8.

<sup>k</sup> ch. 10. 17.

& 20. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Sam. 10.

17. & 11. 15.

18. *and the people and princes, &c.*] The inhabitants of Gilead appear as a separate and independent community, electing their own chief, without any reference to the West-Jordanic tribes.

XI. 1. The history of Jephthah appears to be an independent history inserted by the compiler of the Book of Judges. Verses 4 and 5 introduce the Ammonitish war without any apparent reference to x. 17, 18.

A genealogy of Manasseh (1 Chr. vii. 14-17) gives the families which sprang from Gilead, and among them mention is made of an *Aramite* concubine as the mother of one family. Jephthah, the son of Gilead by a strange woman, fled, after his father's death, to the land of Tob (r. 3), presumably the land of his maternal ancestors (cp. ix. 1) and an *Aramean* settlement (2 Sam. x. 6, 8; 1 Macc. v. 13). It is difficult to conceive that Jephthah was literally the son of Gilead, if Gilead was the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. Possibly *Gilead* here denotes the heir of Gilead, the head of the family, whose individual name has

not been preserved, nor the time when he lived.

3. *the land of Tob*] To the north of Gilead, toward Damascus. The readiness with which Jephthah took to the freebooter's life gives us a lively picture of the unsettled times in which he lived.

7. This gives a wider signification to *vv.* 2, 3, and shows that Jephthah's *brethren* include his fellow tribesmen.

9. Jephthah made his own aggrandisement the condition of his delivering his country. The circumstances of his birth and long residence in a heathen land were little favourable to the formation of the highest type of character. Yet he has his record among the faithful (Heb. xi. 32).

11. *Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh*] This phrase designates the presence of the Tabernacle, or the Ark, or of the High Priest with Urim and Thummim (xx. 26, xxi. 2; Josh. xviii. 8; 1 Sam. xxi. 7). The High Priest waited upon Jephthah with the Ephod, and possibly the Ark, at his own house (see xx. 18 note). A trace of Jephthah's claim to unite

- Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art  
 13 come against me to fight in my land? And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, 'Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto "Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now  
 14 therefore restore those *lands* again peaceably. And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon:  
 15 and said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, "Israel took not away  
 16 the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon: but when Israel came up from Egypt, and "walked through the  
 17 wilderness unto the Red sea, and "came to Kadesh; then "Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: "but the king of Edom would not hearken *thereto*. And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab: but he would not *consent*: and Israel "abode  
 18 in Kadesh. Then they went along through the wilderness, and "compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and "came by the east side of the land of Moab, "and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for  
 19 Arnon *was* the border of Moab. And "Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, "Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy  
 20 land into my place. "But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together,  
 21 and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they "smote them: so Israel possessed all  
 22 the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. And they possessed "all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even  
 23 unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. So now the LORD God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it?  
 24 Wilt not thou possess that which "Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever "the LORD our God shall drive out  
 25 from before us, them will we possess. And now *art* thou any thing better than "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against
- <sup>i</sup> Num. 21.  
<sup>24, 25, 26.</sup>  
<sup>u</sup> Gen. 32.  
<sup>22.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Deut. 2. 9,  
<sup>19.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 14.  
<sup>25.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Deut. 1. 40.  
<sup>Josh. 5. 6.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 13.  
<sup>26. & 20. 1.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Deut. 1. 46.  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 20.  
<sup>14.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 20.  
<sup>18, 21.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 20. 1.  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 21. 4.  
<sup>"</sup> Deut. 2. 1-8.  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 21.  
<sup>11.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 21.  
<sup>13.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 21.  
<sup>21.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Deut. 2. 26.  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 21.  
<sup>22.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 21.  
<sup>23.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Deut. 2. 32.  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 21.  
<sup>24, 25.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Deut. 2. 36.  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 21.  
<sup>20.</sup>  
<sup>1</sup> Kin. 11. 7.  
<sup>Jer. 49. 7.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Deut. 9. 4,  
<sup>5. & 18. 12.</sup>  
<sup>Josh. 3. 10.</sup>  
<sup>"</sup> Num. 22. 2.  
<sup>See Josh.</sup>  
<sup>24. 9.</sup>

all Israel under his dominion is found in xii. 2, and breathes through his whole message to the king of the Ammonites. See *vv.* 12, 15, 23, 27.

13. *from Arnon even unto Jabbok, &c.*] The land bounded by the Arnon on the south, by the Jabbok on the north, by the Jordan on the west, and by the wilderness on the east was, of old, the kingdom of Sihon, but then the territory of Reuben and Gad.

15-28. Consult the marg. ref. If the Ark with the copy of the Law (Dent. xxxi. 26) was at Mizpeh, it would account for Jephthah's accurate knowledge of it; and this exact agreement of his message with Numbers and Deuteronomy would give additional force to the expression, *he uttered all his words before the LORD* (r. 11).

17. No mention is made of this embassy to Moab in the Pentateuch.

19. *into my place*] This expression implies

that the trans-Jordanic possessions of Israel were not included in the land of Canaan properly speaking.

21. The title *God of Israel* has a peculiar emphasis here, and in *v.* 23. in a narrative of transactions relating to the heathen and their gods.

24. Chemosh was the national god of the Moabites (see marg. ref.); and as the territory in question was Moabitish territory before the Amorites took it from "the people of Chemosh," this may account for the mention of Chemosh here rather than of Moloch, or Milcom, the god of the Ammonites. Possibly the king of the children of Ammon at this time may have been a Moabite.

25, 26. Jephthah advances another historical argument. Balak, the king of Moab, never disputed the possession of Sihon's kingdom with Israel.

- 26 them, while Israel dwelt in <sup>o</sup>Heshbon and her towns, and in <sup>a</sup>Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that *be* along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover *them* within that time? Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD <sup>t</sup>be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon. Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him. ¶ Then <sup>t</sup>the Spirit of the LORD came upon <sup>1</sup>Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. And Jephthah <sup>m</sup>vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that <sup>2</sup>whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, <sup>3</sup>shall surely be the LORD's, <sup>3</sup>and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. ¶ So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands. And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to <sup>2</sup>Minnith, *even* twenty cities, and unto <sup>4</sup>the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel. ¶ And Jephthah came to <sup>o</sup>Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, <sup>r</sup>his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she *was* his only child; <sup>5</sup>beside her he had neither

<sup>1</sup> Jephthah seems to have been Judge only of North-east Israel.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *that which cometh*

*forth, which shall come forth.*

<sup>3</sup> Or, *or I will offer it, &c.*

<sup>4</sup> Or, *Abel.*

<sup>5</sup> Or, *he had not of his own either son or daughter.*

<sup>6</sup> Heb. *of himself.*

<sup>o</sup> Num. 21. 25.  
<sup>a</sup> Deut. 2. 36.

<sup>t</sup> Gen. 18. 25.  
<sup>1</sup> Gen. 16. 5.  
<sup>2</sup> 31. 53.  
<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. 24. 12, 15.  
<sup>4</sup> ch. 3. 10.

<sup>m</sup> Gen. 28. 20.  
<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 1. 11.

<sup>n</sup> See Lev. 27. 2, 3, &c.  
<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 1. 11.  
<sup>2</sup> 28. & 2. 18.  
<sup>3</sup> Ps. 60. 13.

<sup>r</sup> Ezek. 27. 17.

<sup>o</sup> ch. 10. 17. ver. 11.  
<sup>r</sup> Ex. 15. 20.  
<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 18. 6.  
<sup>2</sup> Ps. 68. 25.  
<sup>3</sup> Jer. 31. 4.

29. *Then the Spirit of the LORD, &c.*] This was the sanctification of Jephthah for his office of Judge and saviour of God's people Israel. Cp. vi. 34, xiii. 25. The declaration is one of the distinctive marks which stamp this history as a divine history.

The geography is rather obscure, but the sense seems to be that Jephthah first raised all the inhabitants of Mount Gilead; then he crossed the Jabbok into Manasseh, and raised them; then he returned at the head of his new forces to his own camp at Mizpeh to join the troops he had left there; and thence at the head of the whole army marched against the Ammonites, who occupied the southern parts of Gilead.

31. The words of this verse prove conclusively that Jephthah intended his vow to apply to human beings, not animals; for only one of his household could be expected to come forth from the door of his house to meet him. They also preclude any other meaning than that Jephthah contemplated a human sacrifice. This need not, however, surprise us, when we recollect his Syrian birth and long residence in a Syrian city, where such fierce rites were probably common. The Syrians and Phœnicians were conspicuous among the ancient heathen nations for human sacrifices, and the transfer,

under such circumstances, to Jehovah of the rites with which the false gods were honoured, is just what one might expect. The circumstance of the Spirit of the Lord coming on Jephthah (r. 29) is no difficulty; as it by no means follows that because the Spirit of God endued him with supernatural valour and energy for vanquishing the Ammonites, He therefore also endued him with spiritual knowledge and wisdom. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, but that did not prevent his erring in the matter of the ephod (viii. 27). Cp. 1 Cor. xii. 4-11; Gal. ii. 11-14.

33. As in the conflicts with the Moabites, Canaanites, and Midianites (iii., iv., vii.), the battle was on Israelite territory, in self-defence, not in aggressive warfare.

*the plain of the vineyards*] Rather, *Abel-Ceranim* (cp. Abel-Meholah), identified with an *Abel* situated amongst vineyards, 7 miles from Rabbah. *Minnith* is *Maanith*, 4 miles from Heshbon, on the road to Rabbah.

34. *his daughter came out to meet him*] The precise phrase of his vow (r. 31). She was his *only child*, a term of especial endearment (see Jer. vi. 26; Zech. xii. 10). The same word is used of Isaac (Gen. xxii. 2, 12, 16).

\* Gen. 37.  
20, 31.

\* Eccles. 5.  
2-5.  
\* Num. 30. 2.  
1<sup>a</sup>. 15. 4.  
\* Num. 30. 2.  
\* 2 Sam. 18.  
10, 31.

\* ver. 31.  
1 Sam. 1. 22,  
24.  
& 2. 18.

\* See ch. 8.  
1.

\* Job 13. 14.  
1<sup>a</sup>. 110. 109.

35 son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he <sup>1</sup>rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I <sup>2</sup>have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and <sup>3</sup>I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, <sup>4</sup>if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, <sup>5</sup>do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as <sup>6</sup>the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, <sup>7</sup>even of the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may <sup>8</sup>go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. And he said, Go. And he sent her away <sup>9</sup>for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who <sup>10</sup>did with her <sup>11</sup>according to his vow which he had vowed: and she <sup>12</sup>knew no man. ¶ And it was a <sup>13</sup>custom in Israel, <sup>14</sup>that the daughters of Israel went <sup>15</sup>yearly <sup>16</sup>to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

CHAP. 12. AND <sup>1</sup>the men of Ephraim <sup>2</sup>gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire. And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands. And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I <sup>3</sup>put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up

<sup>1</sup> Heb. go and go down.  
<sup>2</sup> Or, ordinance.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. from year to year.  
<sup>4</sup> Or, to talk with, ch. 5. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. were called.

35. Jephthah was right in not being deterred from keeping his vow by the loss and sorrow to himself (cp. marg. ref.), just as Abraham was right in not withholding his son, his only son, from God, when commanded to offer him up as a burnt-offering. But Jephthah was wholly wrong in that conception of the character of God which led to his making the rash vow. And he would have done right not to slay his child, though the guilt of making and of breaking such a vow would have remained. Josephus well characterises the sacrifice as "neither sanctioned by the Mosaic law, nor acceptable to God."

36. The touching submission of Jephthah's daughter to an inevitable fate shows how deeply-rooted at that time was the heathen notion of the propriety of human sacrifice.

37. *bewail my virginity*] To become a wife and a mother was the end of existence to an Israelitish maiden. The premature death of Jephthah's daughter was about to frustrate this end.

40. There is no allusion extant elsewhere to this annual lamentation of the untimely fate of Jephthah's daughter. But the

poetical turn of the narrative suggests that it may be taken from some ancient song (cp. the marginal note 4).

XII. 1. Cp. the similar complaint of the Ephraimites to Gideon (viii. 1), when a civil war was only avoided by Gideon's wise and patriotic moderation. The overbearing pride of Ephraim comes out in both occurrences (see also Josh. xvii. 14-18).

*we will burn thine house upon thee with fire*] Cp. the fierce threat of the Philistines to Samson's wife (xiv. 15), and the yet fiercer execution (xv. 6). Burning appears as a mode of capital punishment (Gen. xxxviii. 24; Josh. vii. 25), and as a mode of desperate warfare (i. 8, xx. 48; Josh. viii. 8, 19, &c.).

2. *when I called you, &c.*] This circumstance is not related in the main narrative. It is likely to have occurred when Jephthah was first chosen leader by the Gileadites, and when Ephraim would probably ignore his pretensions.

3. *I put my life in my hands*] Cp. 1 Sam. xix. 5; xxviii. 21. The phrase expresses the utmost possible risk, knowingly incurred.

4 unto me this day, to fight against me? ¶ Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites <sup>c</sup>are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites. And the Gileadites took the <sup>d</sup> passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, <sup>e</sup>Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; then said they unto him, Say now <sup>f</sup>Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand. ¶ And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in <sup>g</sup>one of the cities of Gilead. ¶ And after him <sup>h</sup>Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel. And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, <sup>i</sup>whom he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. 10, 11 Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Beth-lehem. ¶ And after him <sup>j</sup>Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in 13 Aijalon in the country of Zebulun. ¶ And after him <sup>k</sup>Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel. And he had forty sons and thirty <sup>l</sup>nephews, that <sup>m</sup>rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years. And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, <sup>n</sup>in the mount of the Amalekites.

**CHAP. 13.** AND the children of Israel <sup>o</sup>did evil again in the sight of the LORD; <sup>p</sup>and the LORD delivered them <sup>q</sup>into the hand of

<sup>c</sup> See 1 Sam. 25. 10. Ps. 78. 9. <sup>d</sup> Josh. 22. 11. ch. 3. 28. & 7. 24.

<sup>e</sup> ch. 5. 10. & 10. 4. <sup>f</sup> ch. 3. 13. 27. & 5. 14.

<sup>g</sup> ch. 2. 11. & 3. 7. <sup>h</sup> 4. 1. & 6. 1. <sup>i</sup> 10. 6. & 10. 6. <sup>j</sup> 1 Sam. 22. 0.

<sup>1</sup> Which signifieth a stream, or, flood, Ps. 69. 2, 16. Isai. 27. 12. <sup>2, 3, 4</sup> A civil Judge also in North east Israel. <sup>5</sup> Heb. sons' sons.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. added to commit, &c. <sup>7</sup> This seems a partial captivity.

4. because they said, &c.] This passage is extremely obscure. Render:—"The men of Gilead smote Ephraim, for they (the Gileadites) said, Ye are the fugitives of Ephraim. (Gilead lies between Ephraim and Manasseh; and Gilead took the fords of Jordan before Ephraim, and it came to pass, when the fugitives of Ephraim said Let me pass over, and the Gileadites asked him, art thou an Ephraimite, and he answered No, Then (the Gileadites) said to him say Shibboleth, &c. So they (the Gileadites) slew them at the fords of Jordan"). All that is included in the parenthesis is explanatory of the brief statement "They smote them, for they said, Ye are the fugitives of Ephraim;" i.e. in spite of denial they ascertained that they were the fugitives of Ephraim, and so pitilessly slaughtered them when they endeavoured to return to their own country through Gilead. This part of Gilead, where the fords were, was clearly not in Manasseh, but in Gad. *Slew* (v. 6) implies *slaughtering* in cold blood, not killing in battle (see Jer. xxxix. 6). The word in the original text is the proper word for slaying animals for sacrifice.

6. *Shibboleth*; and he said *Sibboleth*] This is a curious instance of dialectic difference

of pronunciation between the East and West Jordanic tribes. It is an evidence of the sound *sh* having passed into the Hebrew from the East of Jordan, possibly from the Arabians, with whom the sound is common.

forty-two thousand] The number includes the slain in battle and those killed at the fords.

8. *Ibzan of Bethlechem*] Some have fancied him the same as Boaz (Ruth ii. 1) of Bethlechem-Judah. Others, from the juxtaposition of Elon the Zebulonite (v. 11), understand Bethlechem in the tribe of Zebulun (Josh. xix. 15).

11. *a Zebulonite*] The tribe of Zebulun had shown its bravery, patriotism, and prowess in the time of Barak (iv. 10, v. 18).

13. *a Pirathonite*] He was, therefore, an Ephraimite (1 Chr. xxvii. 14). Its name still lingers in *Feratah*, 6 miles west of Shechem. The twenty-five years, apparently consecutive, occupied by the judgeship of Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, seem to have been very uneventful and prosperous, since the only record of them, preserved in the annals of their country, relates to the flourishing families and peaceful magnificence of two of the number.

XIII. 1. The Philistines have been mentioned as oppressors of Israel in iii. 31, and

e Josh. 15.  
 33.  
 d ch. 2. 1.  
 Luke 1. 11,  
 13, 23, 31.  
 f ver. 14.  
 Num. 6. 2, 3.  
 Luke 1. 15.  
 g Num. 6. 5.  
 h Sam. 1. 11.  
 i Num. 6. 2.  
 j See 1 Sam.  
 7. 13.  
 k Sam. 8. 1.  
 l Chr. 13. 1.  
 m Deut. 33. 1.  
 n Sam. 2. 27.  
 o 9. 6.  
 p 1 Kin. 17. 24.  
 q Matt. 23. 3.  
 Luke 9. 29.  
 Acts 6. 15.  
 r ver. 17, 18.

m ver. 4.

2 the Philistines forty years. ¶ And there was a certain man of  
 'Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah;  
 3 and his wife was barren, and bare not. And the "angel of the  
 LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now,  
 thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and  
 4 bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not  
 5 wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: for, lo,  
 thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come  
 on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from  
 the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand  
 6 of the Philistines. ¶ Then the woman came and told her hus-  
 band, saying, 'A man of God came unto me, and his counte-  
 nance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible:  
 but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his  
 7 name: but he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and  
 bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat  
 any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from  
 8 the womb to the day of his death. ¶ Then Manoah intreated the  
 LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou  
 didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do  
 9 unto the child that shall be born. And God hearkened to the  
 voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the  
 woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not  
 10 with her. And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her  
 husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared  
 11 unto me, that came unto me the other day. And Manoah arose,  
 and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto  
 12 him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he  
 said, I am. And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass.  
 How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?  
 13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said  
 14 unto the woman let her beware. She may not eat of any thing  
 that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *What shall be the manner of the, &c.*

<sup>2</sup> Or, *what shall he do?*

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *what shall be his work?*

x. 7, 11; and the Israelite worship of the gods of the Philistines is spoken of in x. 6. But this is the first time that we have any detailed history in connection with the Philistines. They continued to be the prominent enemies of Israel till the time of David.

*forty years*] The Philistine dominion began before the birth of Samson (v. 5), and was in force during Samson's twenty years' judgeship (xiv. 4; xv. 20). The forty years are, therefore, about coincident with Samson's life.

2. *Zorah*] See marg. ref.

*his wife was barren*] To mark more distinctly the high providential destiny of the child that was eventually born. Compare the similar circumstances of the birth of Isaac, Jacob, Samuel, and John the Baptist.

5. *a Nazarite*] See marg. ref. and note. The common Nazarite vow was for a limited time, like St. Paul's (Acts xviii. 18, xxi. 23-26). Others, like Samuel (1 Sam. i. 11), were Nazarites for life.

6. *a man of God*] The designation of a Prophet, of frequent use in the Books of Samuel and Kings (1 Sam. ii. 27, ix. 6, 7, 8, 10; 1 K. xii. 23, xiii. 1, 5, 6, 11), and applied to Timothy by St. Paul in the New Test. (1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 17).

*his countenance*] Rather, "his appearance," as the word is rendered in Dan. x. 18. 12. Translate, "What shall be the manner (or ordering) of the child, and what shall be his work (or exploits)." The original message of the Angel had given information on these two points: (1.) how the child was to be brought up, viz. as a Nazarite; (2.) what he should do, viz. begin to deliver Israel. Manoah desires to have the information repeated (cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 26, 27, 30). Accordingly, in v. 13 the Angel refers to, and enlarges upon, his former injunctions.

14. Cp. Num. vi. 4. In both passages the vine is described by the somewhat unusual though more accurate term, *vine of the wine*—the grape-bearing vine—to dis-



- drink, nor eat any unclean *thing*: all that I commanded her let  
 15 her observe. ¶ And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I  
 pray thee, "let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a  
 16 kid <sup>1</sup>for thee. And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah,  
 Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou  
 wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD.  
 17 For Manoah knew not that he *was* an angel of the LORD. And  
 Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What *is* thy name,  
 that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour?  
 18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, "Why askest thou  
 19 thus after my name, seeing it *is* "secret? So Manoah took a kid  
 with a meat offering, <sup>2</sup>and offered it upon a rock unto the LORD:  
 and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked  
 20 on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven  
 from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the  
 flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and  
 21 "fell on their faces to the ground. But the angel of the LORD  
 did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. "Then Manoah  
 22 knew that he *was* an angel of the LORD. ¶ And Manoah said  
 unto his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God.  
 23 But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us,  
 he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering  
 at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these *things*,  
 nor would as at this time have told us *such things* as these.  
 24 ¶ And the woman bare a son, and called his name "Samson:  
 25 and "the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. "And the  
 Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in "the camp of  
 Dan "between Zorah and Esthaol.  
**CHAP. 14.** AND Samson went down "to Timnath, and <sup>b</sup>saw a woman  
 "in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came  
 up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a  
 woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *before thee*.<sup>2</sup> Or, *wonderful*, Isa. 9, 6.<sup>3</sup> Heb. *Mahanah-dan*, as  
ch. 18. 12.<sup>a</sup> Gen. 18. 5<sup>a</sup> Gen. 32.  
29.<sup>b</sup> ch. 6. 19,  
20.<sup>c</sup> Lev. 9. 24.  
Ezek. 1. 28.  
Matt. 17. 6.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. 6. 22.  
<sup>e</sup> Gen. 32. 30.  
ch. 6. 22.<sup>f</sup> Heb. 11. 32.  
<sup>g</sup> 1 Sam. 3.  
10.  
Luke 1. 80.  
& 2. 52.  
<sup>h</sup> ch. 3. 10.  
1 Sam. 11. 6.  
Matt. 4. 1.  
<sup>i</sup> Josh. 15. 33.  
ch. 18. 11.  
<sup>j</sup> Gen. 38. 13.  
<sup>k</sup> Gen. 34. 2.

tinguish it from the wild cucumber vine (2 K. iv. 39), or other plants to which the name *vine* was applied.

16. The language of Manoah, like that of Gideon (vi. 18), seems to indicate some suspicion that his visitor was more than human. The word rendered *made ready*, is also the proper word for *offering a sacrifice*, and is so used by the Angel in the next verse. By which it appears that the Angel understood Manoah to speak of offering a kid as a burnt-offering. Hence his caution, "thou must offer it unto the Lord." (Cp. Rev. xix. 10, xxii. 8; Acts x. 25, 26.)

17. *do thee honour*] If applied to a man, it would be by gifts, such for instance as Balak promised to the prophet Balaam (Num. xxii. 17), and such as were usually given to seers (1 Sam. ix. 7, 8; 2 K. v. 5, 15): if to God, it would be by sacrifices (Isai. xliii. 23).

18. *secret*] Rather, "*wonderful*," as in margin. In v. 19 the Angel "did wondrously," probably as the Angel that ap-

peared to Gideon had done, bringing fire from the rock. See marg. ref. and notes.

24. *Samson*] The etymology is doubtful. Perhaps it comes from a word signifying to *minister*, in allusion to his Nazaritic consecration to the service of God.

25. *in the camp of Dan*] Rather "Mahanah-Dan" (see marg.). The impulses of the Spirit of the Lord perhaps took the shape of burning indignation at the subjection of his brethren, and thoughts and plans for their deliverance, but especially showed themselves in feats of strength (xiv. 6, xv. 14, xvi. 30. Cp. Acts vii. 23-25).

XIV. 1. *Timnath*] See Josh. xv. 10 and note. It was below Zorah (xiii. 2), about three miles S.W. of it.

2. *get her for me*] viz. by paying the requisite dowry (see marg. ref.) and gifts to relations. Hence the frequent mention of parents taking wives for their sons (Ex. xxxiv. 16; Neh. x. 30), because the parents of the bridegroom conducted the negotiation, and paid the dowry to the parents of the bride.

\* Gen. 21. 21.  
& 34. 4.  
\* Gen. 24. 3, 4.  
\* Gen. 34. 14.  
Ex. 34. 16.  
Deut. 7. 3.  
/ Josh. 11. 20.  
1 Kin. 12. 15.  
2 Kin. 6. 33.  
2 Chr. 10. 15.  
\* ch. 13. 1.  
Deut. 28. 48.

<sup>a</sup> ch. 3. 10.  
& 13. 25.  
1 Sam. 11. 6.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Kin. 10. 1.  
Ezek. 17. 2.  
Luko 14. 7.  
\* Gen. 29. 27.  
\* Gen. 45. 22.  
2 Kin. 5. 22.

3 therefore <sup>c</sup>get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, *Is there* never a woman among the daughters of <sup>d</sup>thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the <sup>e</sup>uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for <sup>f</sup>she pleaseth me well. But his father and his mother knew not that it *was* of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time <sup>g</sup>the Philistines had dominion over Israel. ¶ Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared <sup>h</sup>against him. And <sup>i</sup>the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, *there was* a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion. ¶ So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. ¶ And Samson said unto them, I will now <sup>j</sup>put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me <sup>k</sup>within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty <sup>l</sup>sheets and thirty <sup>m</sup>change of garments: but if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. And he said unto them,

Out of the eater came forth meat,

And out of the strong came forth sweetness.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *she is right in mine eyes.*

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *in meeting him.*

<sup>3</sup> Or, *shirts.*

3. the uncircumcised Philistines] Cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 6, xvii. 26, xxxi. 4, for a similar use of the term as one of reproach. Also Acts xi. 3.

4. His father and mother very properly opposed Samson's marriage with a heathen woman, the daughter of the oppressors of his race. But they could not prevail, because it was the secret purpose of God by these means to "seek occasion" against the Philistines; i.e. to make the misconduct of the father of Samson's wife, which He foresaw, the occasion of destruction to the Philistines. Cp. marg. ref. for similar statements.

8. The formal dowry and gifts having been given by Samson's father, an interval, varying according to the Oriental custom, from a few days to a full year, elapsed between the betrothal and the wedding, during which the bride lived with her friends. Then came the essential part of the marriage ceremony, viz. the removal of the bride from her father's house to that of the bridegroom or his father.

the carcase of the lion] The lion, slain by him a year or some months before, had now become a mere skeleton, fit for bees to swarm into. It was a universal notion among the ancients that bees were generated from the carcase of an ox.

10. made a feast, &c.] This was the wedding-feast, protracted in this instance seven days, in that of Tobias (Tob. viii. 19) fourteen days. It was an essential part of the marriage ceremony (Gen. xxix. 22; Esth. ii. 18; Matt. xxii. 2-4; Rev. xix. 7, 9).

11. thirty companions] These were "the children of the bride-chamber" (Matt. ix. 15; see v. 20). From the number of them it may be inferred that Samson's family was of some wealth and importance.

12. See marg. ref. Riddles formed one of the amusements of these protracted feasts.

sheets] Rather *linen shirts*; the garments which follow are the outward garments worn by the Orientals.

14, 15. three days...on the seventh day] Proposed alterations, such as *six days...on*

- 15 And they could not in three days expound the riddle. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, <sup>m</sup>Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, <sup>n</sup>lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have <sup>n</sup>ch. 18. 5. ye called us <sup>1</sup>to take that we have? <sup>2</sup>is it not so? And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, <sup>c</sup>Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee? And she wept before him <sup>2</sup>the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people. And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

What is sweeter than honey?

And what is stronger than a lion?

- And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, 19 ye had not found out my riddle. ¶ And <sup>p</sup>the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their <sup>2</sup>spoils, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger 20 was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. But Samson's wife <sup>q</sup>was given to his companion, whom he had used as <sup>r</sup>his friend. <sup>p</sup>ch. 3. 10. & 13. 25. <sup>q</sup>ch. 15. 2. <sup>r</sup>John 3. 20.

**CHAP. 15.** BUT it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in. And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly <sup>a</sup>hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: <sup>is</sup> not her younger sister fairer than she? 3 <sup>4</sup>take her, I pray thee, instead of her. ¶ And Samson said concerning them, <sup>5</sup>Now shall I be more blameless than the Philis-

<sup>1</sup> Heb. to possess us, or, to impoverish us?

<sup>2</sup> days, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Or, apparel.

<sup>5</sup> Or, Now shall I be blameless from the Philistines, though, &c.

<sup>4</sup> Or, the rest of the seven

<sup>6</sup> Heb. let her be thine.

the fourth day, are unnecessary if it be remembered that the narrator passes on first to the seventh day (at v. 15), and then goes back at v. 16 and beginning of v. 17 to what happened on the 4th, 5th, and 6th days.

to take that we have] See marg. They affirm, that they were only invited to the wedding for the sake of plundering them by means of this riddle, and if Samson's wife was a party to plundering her own countrymen, she should suffer for it.

18. They try to give the answer in a way to make it appear that they had guessed it. Samson saw at once that she had betrayed him. He lets them know in a speech, which was of the nature of a riddle, that he had discovered the treachery.

20. his companion] Perhaps one of those mentioned in v. 11. The transaction denotes loose notions of the sanctity of marriage among the Philistines. It should be noted carefully that the practical lesson against ungodly marriages comes out most strongly in this case and that the provi-

dential purpose which out of this evil brought discomfiture to the Philistines, has nothing to do with the right or wrong of Samson's conduct.

XV. 1. visited his wife with a kid] A common present (see Gen. xxxviii. 17; Luke xv. 29). From Samson's wife being still in her father's house, it would seem that she was only betrothed, not actually married, to his companion.

2. I gave her] In marriage. Samson had probably not heard of this before. Samson's father had paid the dowry for the elder sister; her father therefore offers her sister in her room. The fear of Samson probably also influenced him.

3. See marg. Before, when the Philistines injured him he was in covenant with the Timnathites through his marriage and by the rites of hospitality; for which reason he went off to Ashkelon to take his revenge (xiv. 19). But now the Philistines themselves had broken this bond, and so he was free to take his revenge on the spot.

- 4 tines, though I do them a displeasure. And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took <sup>1</sup>firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails.
- 5 And when he had set the brands on fire, he let *them* go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, 6 and also the standing corn, with the vineyards *and* olives. Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. <sup>b</sup>And the Philistines 7 came up, and burnt her and her father with fire. ¶ And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged 8 of you, and after that I will cease. And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in 9 the top of the rock Etam. ¶ Then the Philistines went up, and <sup>c</sup>ver. 10. 10 pitched in Judah, and spread themselves 'in Lehi. And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he 11 hath done to us. Then three thousand men of Judah <sup>2</sup>went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines *are* <sup>d</sup>ch. 11. 4. 12 rulers over us? what is this *that* thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto 12 me, so have I done unto them. And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear 13 unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee.

<sup>1</sup> Or, *torches*.<sup>2</sup> Heb. *went down*.

4. foxes] Rather, *jackals*, which are still very common in Palestine, especially about Joppa and Gaza. 1 Sam. xiii. 17 and Josh. xv. 28, xix. 3, are indications of the abundance of foxes or jackals giving names to places, especially in the country of the Philistines. It belongs to Samson's character, and agrees with the incident about the lion, that he should be an expert hunter. Ovid relates a very curious custom at Rome of letting loose foxes with lighted torches fastened to their tails in the circus at the Cerealia, in commemoration of the damage once done to the standing corn by a fox which a rustic had wrapped in hay and straw and set on fire, and which, running away, put the corn-fields in a blaze. This custom, which may have had a Phœnician origin, is a curious illustration of the narrative.

6. burnt her and her father] Out of revenge on Samson's nearest relations; or, as others think, as an act of justice in favour of Samson, and in hope of pacifying his anger. Burning was the punishment for adultery and kindred crimes among the Jews (Gen xxxviii. 24; Lev. xx. 14, xxi. 9). Samson's wife brought upon herself the very punishment which she sought to escape by betraying her husband (xiv. 15).

8. hip and thigh] A proverbial expression of doubtful origin, meaning all the *great* and

*mighty*, all the choice pieces like the thigh and shoulder.

in the top of the rock] Rather, "the cleft of the rock." These clefts of the rock were the natural fortresses and hiding-places of the land. (Isai. ii. 21, lvii. 5. Cp. 1 Sam. xiii. 6; 1 K. xviii. 13.)

Etam] Not the same as the place in the territory of Simeon (1 Chr. iv. 32). Its situation is uncertain, but a site near Eleutheropolis (*Beth-jibrin*) is required; and there exist some extraordinary caverns in the soft limestone or chalky rock, fifteen or twenty feet deep, with perpendicular sides, opening into extensive excavations in the rock, about two hours from Eleutheropolis. [Conder conjectures it to be the same as Atab, a village 12 miles S.W. of Jerusalem, in the 'Arkûb or Ridge.]

9. spread themselves] An expression used of the Philistine mode of war (2 Sam. v. 18, 22), alluding to the compact way in which they came up the wadys, and then dispersed. Lehi is so called by anticipation (see r. 17).

11. The dispirited men of Judah were prepared to give up their champion, in order to conciliate their masters. This shows how hard was the task of the Judge, whose office it was to restore his countrymen to freedom and independence.

And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up  
 14 from the rock. And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines  
 shouted against him : and 'the Spirit of the LORD came mightily  
 upon him, and the cords that *were* upon his arms became as flax  
 that was burnt with fire, and his bands <sup>1</sup>loosed from off his  
 15 hands. And he found a <sup>2</sup>new jawbone of an ass, and put forth  
 his hand, and took it, and <sup>3</sup>slew a thousand men therewith.  
 16 And Samson said,

With the jawbone of an ass, <sup>4</sup>heaps upon heaps,

With the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

17 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking,  
 that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that  
 18 place <sup>5</sup>Ramath-lehi. ¶ And he was sore athirst, and called on  
 the LORD, and said, <sup>6</sup>Thou hast given this great deliverance into  
 the hand of thy servant : and now shall I die for thirst, and fall  
 19 into the hand of the uncircumcised ? But God clave an hollow  
 place that *was* in <sup>7</sup>the jaw, and there came water thereout ; and  
 when he had drunk, <sup>8</sup>his spirit came again, and he revived :  
 wherefore he called the name thereof <sup>9</sup>En-hakkore, which *is* in  
 20 Lehi unto this day. ¶ <sup>10</sup>And he judged Israel <sup>11</sup>in the days of the  
 Philistines twenty years.

CHAP. 16. THEN went Samson to Gaza, and saw there <sup>12</sup>an harlot,  
 2 and went in unto her. And *it was told* the Gazites, saying,  
 Samson is come hither. And they <sup>13</sup>compassed him in, and laid  
 wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were <sup>14</sup>quiet all  
 the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill  
 3 him. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight,  
 and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and  
 went away with them, <sup>15</sup>bar and all, and put *them* upon his

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *were melted*.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *moist*.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *an heap, two heaps*.

<sup>4</sup> That is, *The lifting up of the jawbone, or, casting away of the jawbone*.

<sup>5</sup> Or, *Lehi*.

<sup>6</sup> That is, *The well of him that called, or, cried*, Ps. 34. 6.

<sup>7</sup> He seems to have judged South west Israel dur-

ing twenty years of their servitude of the Philistines.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. *a woman an harlot*.

<sup>9</sup> Heb. *silent*.

<sup>10</sup> Heb. *with the bar*.

<sup>c</sup> ch. 3. 10.  
 & 14. 6.

<sup>f</sup> Lev. 20. 8.  
 Josh. 23. 10.  
 ch. 3. 31.  
 2 Sam. 23.  
 8—12.

<sup>g</sup> Ps. 3. 7.

<sup>h</sup> Gen. 45.  
 27.  
 Isai. 40. 29.  
<sup>i</sup> ch. 13. 1.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. 23.  
 26.  
 Ps. 118. 10,  
 11, 12.  
 Acts 9. 24.

14. the cords...became as flax, &c.] i.e. were as weak against his strength as half-burnt flax which yields to the least pressure.

15. slew a thousand men therewith] Cp. marg. reff. The Philistines, seized with a panic at seeing Samson suddenly burst his cords and rush at them, offered no resistance, but fell an easy prey to the blows of their mighty foe. Some perhaps were dashed down the cliffs in their flight.

16. There is a play upon the word, three times repeated, which means both "an ass" and also "a heap." The spirit of riddle-making (xiv. 12, 18) is apparent in this song of triumph (cp. v. 1; Ex. xv. 1; 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7).

17. Ramath-lehi] Either the height or hill of Lehi, or, of the jaw-bone; or, as in margin, the casting away of the jaw-bone, with allusion to Samson casting it out of his hand, when he had finished his war-song.

19. an hollow place that was in the jaw] The right translation is, "the hollow place which is in Lehi." The word translated

"hollow place," means a mortar (Prov. xxvii. 22), and is here evidently a hollow or basin among the cliffs of Lehi, which, from its shape, was called "the mortar." Aspring, on the way from Socho to Eleutheropolis, was commonly called Samson's spring in the time of St. Jerome and writers in the 7th, 12th, and 14th centuries.

XVI. 1. Gaza] About 8 hours from Eleutheropolis, and one of the chief strongholds of the Philistines.

3. Instead of forcing the doors open, he tore the posts up, as it were, by the roots, with the barred doors attached to them. The word rendered "*went away with them*," means "to pluck up the tent-pins," and hence "to remove." The present town of Gaza (Ghuzzeh) is an open town, without gates or walls, but the sites of the ancient gates still remain visible. One of these, on the south-east, is shown as the gate carried off by Samson.

A partially-isolated hill, about half-an-hour south-east of Gaza, and standing out from the chain that runs up to Hebron,

<sup>b</sup> ch. 14. 15.  
See Prov.  
2. 10—19.  
& 5. 3—11.  
& 6. 24, 25,  
26.  
& 7. 21, 22,  
23.

<sup>c</sup> ch. 14. 16.

<sup>d</sup> Mic. 7. 5.

shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is  
4 before Hebron. ¶ And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a  
5 woman <sup>1</sup>in the valley of Sorek, whose name <sup>was</sup> Delilah. And  
the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her,  
<sup>2</sup>Entice him, and see wherein his great strength <sup>lieth</sup>, and by  
what <sup>means</sup> we may prevail against him, that we may bind him  
to <sup>3</sup>afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven  
6 hundred <sup>pieces</sup> of silver. ¶ And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me,  
I pray thee, wherein thy great strength <sup>lieth</sup>, and wherewith  
7 thou mightest be bound to afflict thee. And Samson said unto  
her, If they bind me with seven <sup>34</sup>green withs that were never  
8 dried, then shall I be weak, and be as <sup>4</sup>another man. Then the  
lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs  
9 which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. Now  
<sup>there were</sup> men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber.  
And she said unto him, The Philistines <sup>be</sup> upon thee, Samson.  
And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it  
10 <sup>6</sup>toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known. ¶ And  
Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and  
told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest  
11 be bound. And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new  
ropes <sup>7</sup>that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as  
12 another man. Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him  
therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines <sup>be</sup> upon thee,  
Samson. And <sup>there were</sup> liers in wait abiding in the chamber.  
13 And he brake them from off his arms like a thread. ¶ And  
Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and  
told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And  
he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head  
14 with the web. And she fastened <sup>it</sup> with the pin, and said unto  
him, The Philistines <sup>be</sup> upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out  
of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with  
<sup>c</sup> ch. 14. 16. 15 the web. ¶ And she said unto him, <sup>8</sup>How canst thou say, I  
love thee, when thine heart <sup>is</sup> not with me? thou hast mocked  
me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great  
16 strength <sup>lieth</sup>. And it came to pass, when she pressed him  
17 daily with her words, and urged him, <sup>so</sup> that his soul was  
<sup>d</sup> Mic. 7. 5. <sup>8</sup>vexed unto death; that he <sup>9</sup>told her all his heart, and said

<sup>1</sup> Or, by the brook.

<sup>2</sup> Or, humble.

<sup>3</sup> Or, new cords.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. moist.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. one.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. smelleth.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. wherewith work hath  
not been done.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. shortened.

bears the name of "Samson's Mount." But it may be doubted whether one of the hills overlooking Hebron is not rather meant.

4. A village to the north of Eleuthropolis, called Caphar-Sorek, was still existing in the time of Eusebius, near Zorah.

5. and the lords of the Philistines] See iii. 3 note.

his great strength <sup>lieth</sup>] Rather, "wherein his strength is great."

eleven hundred <sup>pieces</sup> of silver] The greatness of the bribe offered to Delilah, 5,500 shekels of silver, nearly two talents (Ex. xxxviii. 24. note), shows the importance attached to Samson's capture.

11. occupied] The margin, "wherewith work hath not been done," is better.

14. and she fastened <sup>it</sup> with the pin, &c.] The meaning of the verses seems to be that the seven long plaits, in which Samson's hair was arranged, were to be woven as a woof into the threads of a warp which stood prepared on a loom in the chamber, which loom Delilah fastened down with a pin, so as to keep it firm and immovable. But Samson, when he awoke, tore up the pin from its socket, and went away with the loom and the pin fastened to his hair.

the beam] Rather, the "loom," or frame. The beam is the wooden revolving cylinder, on which the cloth is rolled as fast as it is woven, the Hebrew word for which (1 Sam. xvii. 7; 1 Chr. xi. 23, xx. 5) is quite different from that here used.

unto her, <sup>1</sup>There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man. ¶ And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. <sup>2</sup>And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and <sup>3</sup>put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again <sup>4</sup>after he was shaven. ¶ Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they <sup>5</sup>praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, <sup>6</sup>which slew many of us. And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made <sup>7</sup>them sport: and they set him between the pillars. And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the

<sup>1</sup> Num. 6. 5, ch. 13. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. 7. 26, 27.

<sup>3</sup> Num. 14. 9, 42, 43. Josh. 7. 12. 1 Sam. 16. 14. & 18. 12. & 28. 15. 16. 2 Chr. 15. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Dan. 5. 4.

<sup>5</sup> ch. 9. 27.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. bored out.

<sup>2</sup> Or, as when he was shaven.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. and who multiplied our slain.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. before them.

20. The possession of his extraordinary strength is ascribed (*c.g.* xiii. 25) to the Presence of the Spirit of the Lord. Now the Lord, or the Spirit of the Lord, had departed from him, and so his strength had gone too. The practical lesson against the presumption of self-dependence, and the all-importance of a hearty dependence upon God's Holy Spirit, must not be overlooked.

21. *put out his eyes*] Thus effectually, as they thought, preventing any future mischief on his part, while they prolonged their own triumph and revenge. (Cp. Num. xvi. 14; 2 K. xxv. 7; Jer. xxxix. 7.)

They applied to the two feet fetters of brass (2 Sam. iii. 34; Jer. lii. 11), and made him "grind"—the special task of slaves and captives (Ex. xi. 5; Isai. xlvi. 2; Lam. v. 13).

23. Dagon was the national idol of the Philistines (1 Chr. x. 10), so called from Dag, a fish. The description of Dagon, in his temple at Ashdod (1 Sam. v. 4), exactly agrees with the representations of a fish-god on the walls of Khorsabad, on slabs at

Kouyunjik, and on sundry antique cylinders and gems. In these the figures vary. Some have a human form down to the waist, with that of a fish below the waist; others have a human head, arms, and legs, growing, as it were, out of a fish's body, and so arranged that the fish's head forms a kind of mitre to the man's head, while the body and fins form a kind of cloak, hanging down behind.

24. *Our God, &c.*] A portion of the Philistine triumphal song. Cp. ch. v., Ex. xv.

25. *that he may make us sport*] Rather, "that he may play for us," *i.e.* dance and make music. At an idolatrous feast, dancing was always accompanied with vocal and instrumental music.

26. More literally, "let me rest, and let me feel the pillars, that I may lean upon them." He feigned weariness with his dancing and singing, and asked to recover himself by leaning against the pillars. The flat roof, from the top of which, as well as under it, spectators could see what was being done on the stage in front, was mainly supported by two pillars. The lords and

\* Deut. 22. 8. lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the <sup>k</sup>roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord God, <sup>1</sup>remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and <sup>1</sup>on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of 30 the other with his left. And Samson said, Let <sup>2</sup>me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might: and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than 31 *they* which he slew in his life. ¶ Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and <sup>m</sup>buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

<sup>m</sup> ch. 13. 25.

CHAP. 17. AND there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name <sup>2</sup>was Micah. And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver *is* with me; I took it. And his mother said, "Blessed be thou of 3 the LORD, my son. And when he had restored the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to <sup>b</sup>make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee. Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother <sup>c</sup>took two hundred *shekels* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah. 5 And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an <sup>d</sup>ephod, and <sup>e</sup>teraphim, and <sup>3</sup>consecrated one of his sons, who became

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 14. 19.  
Ruth 3. 10.

<sup>b</sup> See Exod. 20. 4, 23.  
Lev. 19. 4.  
<sup>c</sup> Isai. 46. 6.

<sup>d</sup> ch. 8. 27.  
<sup>e</sup> Gen. 31. 19, 30.  
Hos. 3. 4.

<sup>1</sup> Or, *he leaned on them*.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *my soul*.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *filled the hand*, Ex. 29. 9. 1 Kin. 13. 33.

principal persons sat *under* the roof, while the people, to the number of 3000, stood on the flat roof. When the pillars were removed, the weight of 3000 people brought the roof down with a fearful crash, and those above fell together with the stones and timbers upon those below, and a great slaughter was the result, Samson himself perishing under the ruins.

28. *at once avenged*] i.e. with one final revenge. These words do not breathe the spirit of the Gospel, but they express a sentiment, natural to the age, knowledge, and character of Samson.

31. "All the house of his father," in connection with "his brethren," must mean the whole tribe of Dan, aiding his nearer relations. The Danites, taking advantage of the consecration of the Philistines, and of the death of their lords and chief men, went down in force to Gaza, and recovered the body of their great captain and Judge, and buried him in his father's sepulchre.

XVII. See Introduction, p. 68. The only point of contact with the preceding history of Samson is, that we are still concerned with the tribe of Dan. See xviii. 1, 2, note. Josephus combines in one narrative what we read here and in i. 34, and places it, with the story in chapters xviii. - xxi., immediately after the death of Joshua. 2. *thou cursedst*] or, *adjuredst me by God*. Cp. Matt. xxvi. 63; Levit. v. 1.

3. Such a superstitious and unlawful mode of worshipping Jehovah is quite of a piece with viii. 27, xi. 31; 1 K. xii. 28, &c. It argues but slight acquaintance with the Ten Commandments, which, from the ignorance of reading and writing, were probably not familiar to the Israelites in those unsettled times. The mother intimates that the consecration of the silver was for the benefit of her son and his house, not for her own selfish advantage: and that she adheres to her original design of consecrating this silver for her son's benefit.

4. See viii. 27; Gen. xxxi. 19 notes.



6 his priest. <sup>f</sup>In those days *there was* no king in Israel, <sup>g</sup>but  
 7 every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes. ¶ And  
 there was a young man out of <sup>h</sup>Beth-lehem-judah of the family  
 8 of Judah, who *was* a Levite, and he sojourned there. And the  
 man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-judah to sojourn  
 where he could find *a place*: and he came to mount Ephraim  
 9 the house of Micah, <sup>h</sup>as he journeyed. And Micah said unto  
 him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I *am* a  
 Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may  
 10 find *a place*. And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, <sup>i</sup>and be  
 unto me a <sup>k</sup>father and a priest, and I will give thee ten *shekels* of  
 silver by the year, and <sup>2a</sup>a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So  
 11 the Levite went in. And the Levite was content to dwell with  
 the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons.  
 12 And Micah <sup>l</sup>consecrated the Levite; and the young man <sup>m</sup>be-  
 13 came his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said  
 Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I  
 have a Levite to my priest.

CHAP. 18. IN <sup>a</sup>those days *there was* no king in Israel: and in those  
 days <sup>b</sup>the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to  
 dwell in; for unto that day *all their inheritance* had not fallen  
 2 unto them among the tribes of Israel. And the children of Dan  
 sent of their family five men from their coasts, <sup>c</sup>men of valour,  
 from <sup>c</sup>Zorah, and from Eshtaol, <sup>d</sup>to spy out the land, and to  
 search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who  
 when they came to mount Ephraim, to the <sup>e</sup>house of Micah,  
 3 they lodged there. When they *were* by the house of Micah, they  
 knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned  
 in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and  
 4 what makest thou in *this place*? and what hast thou here? And  
 he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and  
 5 hath <sup>f</sup>hired me, and I am his priest. And they said unto  
 him, <sup>g</sup>Ask counsel, we pray thee, <sup>h</sup>of God, that we may know  
 6 whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. And the  
 priest said unto them, <sup>i</sup>Go in peace: before the LORD *is* your

<sup>1</sup> Heb. in making his way.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. an order of garments.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. sons.

<sup>f</sup> ch. 18. 1.  
<sup>g</sup> & 19. 1.  
<sup>h</sup> & 21. 25.  
<sup>i</sup> Deut. 33. 5.  
<sup>j</sup> Deut. 12. 8.  
<sup>k</sup> See Josh.  
 19. 15.  
<sup>l</sup> Ruth 1. 1.  
<sup>m</sup> Mic. 5. 2.  
 Matt. 2. 1.

<sup>i</sup> ch. 18. 19.

<sup>k</sup> Gen. 45. 8.  
 Job 29. 16.

<sup>l</sup> ver. 5.

<sup>m</sup> ch. 18. 30.

<sup>a</sup> ch. 17. 6.  
<sup>b</sup> & 21. 25.  
<sup>c</sup> Josh. 19.  
 47.

<sup>c</sup> ch. 13. 25.  
<sup>d</sup> Num. 13.  
 17.  
<sup>e</sup> Josh. 2. 1.  
<sup>f</sup> ch. 17. 1.

<sup>f</sup> ch. 17. 10.  
<sup>g</sup> 1 Kin. 22. 5.  
<sup>h</sup> Isai. 30. 1.  
<sup>i</sup> Hos. 4. 12.  
<sup>j</sup> Seech. 17. 5.  
<sup>k</sup> & ver. 14.  
<sup>l</sup> 1 Kin. 22. 6.

6. *In those days, &c.*] This phrase, indicating distinctly that the writer lived after the establishment of the kingly government in Israel, is peculiar to the author of these last five chapters.

7. The Hebrew words for "*he sojourned there*" are, GER-SHOM, which words are used (xviii. 30) in the genealogy of this young Levite, whose name was "Jonathan, the son of Gershom." Hence some read here, "the son of Gershom."

8. Jonathan's state without a home gives us a vivid picture of what must have been the condition of many Levites.

10. *ten shekels*.] About 25s. to 26s. (see Ex. xxxviii. 24).

13. This shows the ignorance as well as the superstition of the age (cp. 2 K. xviii. 22), and gives a picture of the lawlessness of the times. The incidental testimony to the Levitical priesthood is to be noted; but the idolatrous worship in the immediate neighbourhood of Shiloh is passing strange.

XVIII. 2. This identity of locality with the scene of Samson's birth and death indicates that both narratives are drawn from the same source, probably the annals of the tribe of Dan.

3. It does not follow that they had known him before, and recognized his voice, though it may be so. But the Hebrew equally bears the sense that they heard the voice of the Levite; and, attracted by it, went into the chapel (v. 18) where Jonathan was. They were probably just starting on their journey, but were still within the court or precincts of Micah's house. Micah had evidently not told them of his house of God, and his Levite. Their questions indicate surprise.

5. The sight of the ephod and teraphim suggested the notion of enquiring of God.

6. *before the LORD, &c.*] i.e. He looks favourably upon it. (Cp. Ezr. viii. 21, 22.)

- 7 way wherein ye go. ¶ Then the five men departed, and came to  
<sup>a</sup>Laish, and saw the people that *were* therein, <sup>1</sup>how they dwelt  
careless, *after* the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure;  
and *there was* no <sup>1</sup>magistrate in the land, that might put *them*  
to shame in *any* thing; and they *were* far from the Zidonians,  
8 and had no business with *any* man. And they came unto their  
brethren to <sup>m</sup>Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto  
9 them, What *say* ye? And they said, <sup>a</sup>Arise, that we may go up  
against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it *is* very  
good: and *are* ye <sup>o</sup>still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to  
10 possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a people  
<sup>p</sup>secure, and to a large land; for God hath given it into your  
hands; <sup>q</sup>a place where *there is* no want of any thing that *is* in  
11 the earth. ¶ And there went from thence of the family of the  
Danites out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men <sup>a</sup>ap-  
12 pointed with weapons of war. And they went up, and pitched  
in <sup>r</sup>Kirjath-jearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place  
<sup>r</sup>Mahanoh-dan unto this day: behold, it *is* behind Kirjath-  
13 jearim. And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and  
14 came unto <sup>t</sup>the house of Micah. <sup>u</sup>Then answered the five men  
that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their  
brethren, Do ye know that <sup>u</sup>there is in these houses an ephod,  
and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now  
15 therefore consider what ye have to do. And they turned thither-  
ward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, *even*  
16 unto the house of Micah, and <sup>v</sup>saluted him. And the <sup>v</sup>six hun-  
dred men appointed with their weapons of war, which *were* of  
17 the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. And  
<sup>w</sup>the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came  
in thither, and took <sup>w</sup>the graven image, and the ephod, and the  
teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the  
entering of the gate with the six hundred men *that were* ap-  
18 pointed with weapons of war. And these went into Micah's  
house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the tera-  
phim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them,  
19 What do ye? And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, <sup>b</sup>lay
- <sup>k</sup> Josh. 10.  
47, called  
*Leshem*.  
<sup>i</sup> ver. 27, 28.  
<sup>m</sup> ver. 2.  
<sup>n</sup> Num. 13. 30.  
Josh. 2. 23,  
24.  
<sup>o</sup> 1 Kin. 22. 3.  
<sup>p</sup> ver. 7, 27.  
<sup>q</sup> Deut. 8. 9.  
<sup>r</sup> Josh. 15.  
60.  
<sup>s</sup> ch. 13. 25.  
<sup>t</sup> ver. 2.  
<sup>u</sup> 1 Sam. 14.  
28.  
<sup>v</sup> ch. 17. 5.  
<sup>w</sup> ver. 11.  
<sup>x</sup> ver. 2, 14.  
<sup>y</sup> ch. 17. 3, 5.  
<sup>z</sup> Job 21. 5.  
& 29. 9.  
& 40. 4.  
Prov. 30. 32.  
Mic. 7. 10.  
<sup>1</sup> Heb. *possessor*, or, *heir of*  
*restraint*.  
<sup>2</sup> Heb. *girded*.  
<sup>3</sup> Heb. *asked him of peace*,  
Gen. 43. 27. 1 Sam. 17.  
22.

7. *Laish*] Afterwards called *Dan* (v. 29). The exact site has not been identified, but it was the northern extremity of Israel, near the sources of the Jordan, and about four miles from Panium, or Caesarea-Philippi. It is thought to have stood where the village Tell-el-Kadi now stands.

*after the manner of the Zidonians*] The genius of the Zidonians being mechanical and commercial, not military, their colonists were apt to neglect fortifications and similar warlike precautions. In Solomon's time the Zidonians were especially skilful in hewing timber (1 K. v. 6; 1 Chr. xxii. 4), and it is highly probable, from their proximity to Lebanon, that such was the occupation of the men of Laish.

*quiet and secure, &c.*] This is a very obscure and difficult passage. Translate thus: "Quiet and secure, and none of them do-

ing any injury in the land, possessing wealth," or *dominion*.

12. *Kirjath-jearim*] "City of forests," otherwise called "Kirjath-Baal" (marg. ref.), identified by Robinson with the modern *Kurit-el-Enab*, on the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem [and by Conder with Sôba].

14. *in these houses*] This agrees with what we saw at vv. 2 and 3 that the "house of God" and Jonathan's house were detached from Micah's. There were other houses besides (v. 22). The whole settlement was probably called Beth-Micah, contained in one court, and entered by one gate (v. 16).

17. The five went back to Micah's chapel (Micah's house, v. 18) and took the ephod, teraphim, &c., and brought them to the gate where the priest was talking to the six hundred men.

thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: *is it* better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people. So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them. ¶ And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan. And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what *is* this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee? And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house. And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man; and it was in the valley that lieth by Beth-rehob. ¶ And they built a city, and dwelt therein. And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first. And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *that thou art gathered together?*

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *bitter of soul*, 2 Sam. 17. 8.

<sup>d</sup> ver. 7, 10.  
<sup>e</sup> Deut. 33. 22.  
<sup>f</sup> Josh. 19. 47.  
<sup>g</sup> ver. 7.  
<sup>h</sup> 2 Sam. 10. 0.  
<sup>i</sup> Josh. 19. 47.  
<sup>j</sup> Gen. 14. 1.  
<sup>k</sup> ch. 20. 1.  
<sup>l</sup> 1 Kin. 12. 29, 30.  
<sup>m</sup> ch. 13. 1.  
<sup>n</sup> 1 Sam. 4. 2, 3, 10, 11.  
<sup>o</sup> Ps. 78. 60.  
<sup>p</sup> Josh. 18. 1.  
<sup>q</sup> ch. 19. 18.

21. *and put the little ones, &c., before them*] They expected a pursuit from Micah's people, and arranged their order of march accordingly.

*the carriage*] Rather, "*the valuables*." Some interpret it "the heavy baggage."

22. *were gathered together*] Literally, "were called together." The men, who were all Micah's workmen, were probably in the fields with their master at the time of the robbery. When the women saw what was done they gave the alarm, and Micah called the men together as quickly as possible, and pursued the Danites and overtook them.

27. *the things which Micah had made*] Rather, from v. 24, "*the gods which Micah had made*." See v. 31; Deut. xxvii. 15; Ex. xx. 4.

28. Rehob (as Dan afterwards) is mentioned as the northernmost point of the land of Canaan (Num. xiii. 21), and its po-

sition is defined with reference to the entering in of Hamath.

*a city*] Rather, "*the*" city. They rebuilt Laish, which they had burnt down (v. 29).

30. In the Hebrew text the name here

rendered MANASSEH is written M SH. Without the *n* suspended over the line, the word may be read MOSES, whose son was Gershom (Ex. ii. 22), whose son or descendant Jonathan clearly was. The Masorctes, probably grieved that a descendant of Moses should have been implicated in idolatrous worship, adopted this expedient for disguising the fact without absolutely falsifying the text. The Vulgate has *Moses*, the Septuagint *Manasses*.

Verses 30, 31, seem to tell us that Jonathan's descendants were priests to the tribe of Dan till the captivity (2 K. xv. 29, xvii. 6); and that the graven image was in their custody till David's time, by whose

<sup>a</sup> ch. 17. 6.  
& 18. 1.  
& 21. 25.

<sup>b</sup> ch. 17. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. 18. 5.

<sup>d</sup> Josh. 18.  
28.

<sup>e</sup> Josh. 15. 8,  
93.  
ch. 1. 21.  
2 Sam. 5. 6.  
<sup>f</sup> Josh. 18.  
28.

**CHAP. 19.** AND it came to pass in those days, <sup>a</sup>when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him <sup>1</sup>a concubine out of <sup>2</sup>Beth-lehem-judah. And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Beth-lehem-judah, and was there <sup>3</sup>four whole months. <sup>3</sup>¶ And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak <sup>4</sup>friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced <sup>4</sup>to meet him. And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat <sup>5</sup>and drink, and lodge there. And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son in law, <sup>6</sup>"Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your <sup>6</sup>way. And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be <sup>7</sup>merry. And when the man rose up to depart, his father in law <sup>8</sup>urged him: therefore he lodged there again. And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they <sup>9</sup>tarried 'untill afternoon, and they did eat both of them. And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day <sup>7</sup>draweth toward evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, <sup>8</sup>the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to morrow get you early on your <sup>10</sup>way, that thou mayest go <sup>9</sup>home. But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came <sup>10</sup>over against "Jebus, which *is* Jerusalem; and *there were* with him two asses <sup>11</sup>saddled, his concubine also *was* with him. ¶ And when they *were* by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city <sup>12</sup>of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that *is* <sup>13</sup>not of the children of Israel; we will pass over <sup>11</sup>to Gibeah. And

<sup>1</sup> Heb. a woman a concubine, or, a wife a concubine.

<sup>2</sup> Or, a year and four months.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. days four months.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. to her heart, Gen. 31. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. strengthen.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. till the day declined.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. is weak.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. it is the pitching time of the day.

<sup>9</sup> Heb. to thy tent.

<sup>10</sup> Heb. to over against.

order, perhaps, it was destroyed, though the idolatrous worship continued, or was revived, at Dan.

**XIX.** This history has no connexion whatever with the preceding. The note of time (xx. 28) shows that the date of it is in the lifetime of the first generation of settlers in Canaan.

1. *a concubine*] See marg. The name does not imply any moral reproach. A concubine was as much the man's wife as the woman so called, though she had not the same rights. See rr. 3, 4.

2. *played the whore against him*] Perhaps only meaning that she ran away from him,

and left him; for she returned to her father's house.

9. This is a perfect picture of the manners of the time. It is probable that the father showed more than usual hospitality, in order to ensure the kind treatment of his daughter by her husband. These particulars are given to account for their journey running so far into the evening, which was the immediate cause of the horrible catastrophe which followed.

12. *city of a stranger*] This shows how completely, even in these early days, the Jebusite population had excluded both the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

- he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of  
 14 these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in <sup>g</sup>Ramah. And  
 they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down  
 upon them *when they were* by Gibeah, which *belongeth* to Benjamin.  
 15 And they turned aside thither, to go in *and* to lodge in  
 Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of  
 the city: for *there was* no man that <sup>a</sup>took them into his house to  
 16 lodging. ¶ And, behold, there came an old man from <sup>h</sup>his work  
 out of the field at even, which *was* also of mount Ephraim; and  
 he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place *were* Benjaminites.  
 17 And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring  
 man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither  
 18 goest thou? and whence comest thou? And he said unto him,  
 We are passing from Beth-lehem-judah toward the side of  
 mount Ephraim; from thence *am* I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah,  
 but I *am now* going to <sup>k</sup>the house of the LORD; and  
 19 there *is* no man that <sup>l</sup>receiveth me to house. Yet there is both  
 straw and provender for our asses: and there is bread and wine  
 also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man *which*  
 20 *is* with thy servants: *there is* no want of any thing. And the  
 old man said, 'Peace be with thee; howsoever *let* all thy wants  
 21 *lie* upon me; <sup>m</sup>only lodge not in the street. "So he brought him  
 into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: <sup>n</sup>and they  
 22 washed their feet, and did eat and drink. ¶ Now as they were  
 making their hearts merry, behold, <sup>o</sup>the men of the city, certain  
 sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the  
 door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying,  
 'Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may  
 23 know him. And <sup>p</sup>the man, the master of the house, went out  
 unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, *nay*, I pray  
 you, do not *so* wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine  
 24 house, 'do not this folly. "Behold, *here is* my daughter a  
 maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and  
<sup>q</sup>humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto  
 25 you: but unto this man do not <sup>r</sup>so vile a thing. But the men  
 would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and  
 brought her forth unto them; and they <sup>s</sup>knew her, and abused  
 her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to  
 26 spring, they let her go. Then came the woman in the dawn-  
 ing of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house  
 27 where her lord *was*, till it was light. And her lord rose up in  
 the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out  
 to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen  
 down at the door of the house, and her hands *were* upon the  
 28 threshold. And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But

<sup>g</sup> Josh. 18.  
25.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 25.  
43.  
Heb. 13. 2.  
<sup>h</sup> Ps. 104. 23.

<sup>k</sup> Josh. 18. 1.  
ch. 18. 31.  
& 20. 18.  
<sup>l</sup> Sam. 1. 3,  
7.

<sup>m</sup> Gen. 43. 23.  
ch. 0. 23.  
<sup>n</sup> Gen. 19. 2.  
<sup>o</sup> Gen. 24. 32.  
<sup>p</sup> Gen. 18. 4.  
John 13. 5.  
<sup>q</sup> Gen. 19. 4.  
ch. 20. 5.  
Hos. 9. 9.  
<sup>r</sup> Deut. 13.  
13.  
<sup>s</sup> Gen. 19. 5.  
Rom. 1. 26.  
<sup>t</sup> Gen. 19. 6.  
<sup>u</sup> 2 Sam. 13.  
12.  
<sup>v</sup> Gen. 19. 8.  
<sup>w</sup> Gen. 34. 2.  
Deut. 21. 14.

<sup>x</sup> Gen. 4. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *gathereth*, ver. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *the matter of this folly*.

14. *Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin*] See Josh. xviii. 24 note.

15. *a street*] Probably the square or place within the gates, where courts were held, bargains made, and where the chief men and strangers congregated.

16. *which was also of Mount Ephraim*] i.e., of the country of the Levite. This single giver of hospitality was himself a stranger and sojourner at Gibeah.

18. *the house of the LORD*] Probably at Shiloh (marg. ref.). The Levite was pro-

bably one of those who ministered at the Tabernacle. His two asses and servant show him to have been in good circumstances, and he had a home of his own.

23. *this man is come into mine house*] He appeals to the sacred rights of hospitality, just as Lot did (Gen. xix. 8). Both cases betray painfully the low place in the social scale occupied by woman in the old world, from which it is one of the glories of Christianity to have raised her.

- \* ch. 20. 5.      "none answered. Then the man took her *up* upon an ass, and  
29 the man rose up, and gat him unto his place. ¶ And when he  
was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his  
concubine, and *a*divided her, *together* with her bones, into twelve  
\* ch. 20. 6.      30 pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel. And it was so,  
that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen  
from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land  
of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, *b*take advice, and speak  
*your minds*.  
b ch. 20. 7.      **CHAP. 20. THEN** "all the children of Israel went out, and the  
Prov. 13. 10.      congregation was gathered together as one man, from *b*Dan  
even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD "in  
a Deut. 13.      2 Mizpeh. And the chief of all the people, *even* of all the tribes of  
12.      Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of  
Josh. 22. 12.      3 God, four hundred thousand footmen *a*that drew sword. (Now  
ch. 21. 5.      the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were  
b ch. 18. 20.      gone up to Mizpeh.) ¶ Then said the children of Israel, Tell us,  
1 Sam. 3. 20.      4 how was this wickedness? And *b*the Levite, the husband of the  
c ch. 10. 17.      woman that was slain, answered and said, "I came into Gibeah  
d 11. 11.      5 that *belongeth* to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. "And  
" ch. 8. 10.      the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round  
about upon me by night, and thought to have slain me: "and  
e ch. 19. 25,      6 my concubine have they *a*forced, that she is dead. And *b*I took  
20.      my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout  
f ch. 19. 22.      all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they *b*have com-  
g ch. 19. 25,      7 mitted lewdness and folly in Israel. Behold, *ye are* all children  
20.      of Israel; *a*give here your advice and counsel. ¶ And all the  
h ch. 19. 20.      people arose as one man, saying, We will not any *of us* go to  
i Josh. 7. 15.      9 his tent, neither will we any *of us* turn into his house. But  
j ch. 19. 20.      now this *shall be* the thing which we will do to Gibeah; *we will*  
10 go up by lot against it; and we will take ten men of an hundred

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *the man the Levite*.<sup>2</sup> Heb. *humbled*.

29. *a knife*] Rather, "the" *knife*. The single household implement used, not like our knives at our meals, but for slaughtering and cutting up the animals into joints for eating (Gen. xxii. 6, 10; Prov. xxx. 14). *together with her bones, &c.*] Rather, *into her bones, or bone by bone, into twelve pieces*. The *pieces* are synonymous with the *bones* (cp. Ezek. xxiv. 4, 5). There is something truly terrible in the stern ferocity of grief and indignation which dictated this desperate effort to arouse his countrymen to avenge his wrong. Cp. 1 Sam. xi. 7.

XX. 1. The *congregation* is the technical term for the whole community of the Israelitish people. Its occurrence here is an indication of the early date of these transactions.

*from Dan to Beer-sheba*] We cannot safely infer from this expression that the settlement of Dan, recorded in ch. xviii. had taken place at this time. It only proves that in the writer's time, from Dan to Beer-sheba was a proverbial expression for all Israel (cp. marg. ref.).

*with the land of Gilead*] Meaning all the trans-Jordanic tribes; mentioned particularly, both to show that the whole congrega-

tion of the children of Israel, in its widest meaning, took part in the council, and also because of Jabesh-Gilead (xxi. 8, 10).

*unto the Lord in Mizpeh*] The phrase *unto the Lord*, implies the presence of the Tabernacle (xi. 11 note). Mizpeh in Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 26), from its connexion with Bethel and Ramah, is probably meant here. It is the same as that which appears as a place of national assembly in 1 Sam. vii. 5, x. 17; 2 K. xxv. 23-25. It must have been near Shiloh and Gibeah, and in the north of Benjamin. The Benjamites were duly summoned with the other tribes; so that their absence was contumacious (r. 3).

2. *the chief*] Literally, "the corner stones." (Cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 38.)

3. They bound themselves not to break up and disperse till they had punished the wickedness of Gibeah.

9. *by lot*] To determine who should go up first (r. 18). The shape of the ground probably made it impossible for the whole force to operate at once; and the question of spoil would have something to do with the arrangement. (Cp. 1 Sam. xxx. 22-25.)

10. In order to make it possible for the

- throughout all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel. So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, <sup>1</sup>knit together as one man. ¶ And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness <sup>2</sup>is this that is done among you? Now therefore deliver us the men, <sup>3</sup>the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and <sup>4</sup>put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel: but the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel. And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. Among all this people <sup>5</sup>there were seven hundred chosen men <sup>6</sup>left-handed; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss. And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these were men of war. ¶ And the children of Israel arose, and <sup>7</sup>went up to the house of God, and <sup>8</sup>asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah <sup>9</sup>shall go up first. And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah. And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah. And <sup>10</sup>the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men. ¶ And the people the men of Israel encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day. <sup>11</sup>And the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD

<sup>1</sup> Dent. 13. 14.  
Josh. 22. 13,  
16.

<sup>2</sup> Dent. 13.  
13.  
ch. 19. 22.  
<sup>3</sup> Dent. 17.  
12.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Chr. 12. 2.

<sup>5</sup> ver. 23, 26.  
<sup>6</sup> Num. 27. 21.  
ch. 1. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Gen. 40. 27.

<sup>8</sup> ver. 26, 27.

<sup>9</sup> Heb. fellows.

force of Israel to keep the field, and do to the men of Gibeah what their wickedness deserved, every tenth man (forty thousand in all) was appointed to find provisions for the whole army.

15-17. Comparing the numbers here with those in Num. i. and xxvi., it is seen that in the case both of the Benjamites and the Israelites the numbers are diminished by about one-third, i.e. they appear as about two-thirds only of what they were at the last numbering in the plains of Moab. This diminution seems to indicate disturbed and harassing times. With this agrees the mention of the cities, as containing the whole Benjamite population. The inference is that the open country and unwall'd villages were not safe, but that the Benjamites kept the Canaanites in subjection only by dwelling in fortified towns.

16. See iii. 15, and note. In the LXX. and Vulg. the seven hundred chosen men of

Gibeah are represented as the seven hundred left-handed slingers.

18. *went up to the house of God* [It should be "to Bethel." At this time the Ark was at Bethel (cp. 1 Sam. x. 3), and not at Shiloh. It is not unlikely that though Shiloh was the chief residence of the Ark (Jer. vii. 12), yet the Tabernacle, being moveable, was, either at stated times, or as occasion required, moved to where the Judge resided, or the congregation assembled (cp. 1 Sam. vii. 16). On the present occasion the Ark may have been moved to Bethel for the convenience of proximity to the great national council at Mizpeh.

21. Gibeah, being on a hill, was difficult of access to an attacking army, and gave great advantage to the defenders, who fought from higher ground, and probably defended a narrow pass, while their companions on the walls could gall the assailants with their slingstones.

until even, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother?

24 And the LORD said, Go up against him.) And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second

<sup>1</sup> ver. 21. 25 day. And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the

26 sword. ¶ Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, <sup>"</sup> ver. 18. went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

27 And the children of Israel enquired of the LORD, (for <sup>"</sup> the ark <sup>"</sup> Josh. 18. 1. of the covenant of God <sup>"</sup> Sam. 4. 3. was there in those days, <sup>"</sup> and Phinehas,

28 the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, <sup>"</sup> Josh. 24. stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD

said, Go up; for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand. <sup>"</sup> So Josh. 8. 4. 29, 30 ¶ And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah. And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on

31 the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times. And the children of Benjamin went out against

the people, and were drawn away from the city; and they began <sup>1</sup> to smite of the people, and kill, as at other times, in the high-

ways, of which one goeth up to <sup>2</sup> the house of God, and the

32 other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Israel. And the children of Benjamin said, They are smitten down before us,

as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and

33 draw them from the city unto the highways. And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and put themselves in array

at Baal-tamar: and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of

34 their places, even out of the meadows of Gibeah. And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel,

and the battle was sore: <sup>1</sup> but they knew not that evil was near <sup>"</sup> Josh. 8. 14. 35 them. And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty

and five thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the 36 sword. ¶ So the children of Benjamin saw that they were

<sup>1</sup> Heb. to smite of the people wounded us at, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Or, Beth-el.

26. *fasted until even* The regular time for ending a fast among the Hebrews was sunset (cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 24; 2 Sam. i. 12). Such national fasts are called by the Rabbis *fasts of the congregation*, and were enjoined in times of great affliction.

On the offerings, see Lev. i., iii.

28. *Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, &c.* A most important chronological statement, which makes it probable that these events occurred within twenty years of the death of Joshua.

*To-morrow* The two former answers only bade them go up against Benjamin; now, for the first time, the promise is added, "To-morrow," &c. (cp. Josh. viii. 1).

29. The stratagem described is exactly that by which Joshua took Ai (marg. ref.).

31. *to the house of God* "To Bethel," as in the margin.

On "Gibeah in the field," see Josh. xviii. 24 note.

33. Baal-tamar is only mentioned here. It took its name from some palm-tree that grew there; perhaps the same as the "palm-tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel" (iv. 5), the exact locality here indicated, since "the highway" (v. 31) along which the Israelites enticed the Benjamites to pursue them, leads straight to Ramah, which lay only a mile beyond the point where the two ways branch off.

*the meadows of Gibeah* The word rendered meadow is only found here. According to its etymology, it ought to mean a bare open place, which is particularly unsuitable for an ambush. But by a change in the vowel-points, without any alteration in the letters, it becomes the common word for a cavern.



smitten: <sup>c</sup>for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites, because they trusted unto the liers in wait which they had set  
 37 beside Gibeah. <sup>d</sup>And the liers in wait hasted, and rushed upon Gibeah; and the liers in wait <sup>e</sup>drew themselves along, and smote  
 38 all the city with the edge of the sword. Now there was an appointed <sup>2</sup>sign between the men of Israel <sup>3</sup>and the liers in wait, that they should make a great <sup>4</sup>flame with smoke rise up  
 39 out of the city. And when the men of Israel retired in the battle, Benjamin began <sup>5</sup>to smite and kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons: for they said, Surely they are smitten  
 40 down before us, as *in* the first battle. But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites <sup>6</sup>looked behind them, and, behold, <sup>7</sup>the flame of the  
 41 city ascended up to heaven. And when the men of Israel turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for they saw that  
 42 evil <sup>7</sup>was come upon them. Therefore they turned *their backs* before the men of Israel unto the way of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them; and them which *came out of the cities*  
 43 they destroyed in the midst of them. *Thus* they inclosed the Benjamites round about, and chased them, and <sup>8</sup>trode them down <sup>9</sup>with ease <sup>9</sup>over against Gibeah toward the sunrising.  
 44 And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men; all these <sup>10</sup>were men of valour. And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them  
 46 unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them. So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand  
 47 men that drew the sword; all these *were* men of valour. <sup>11</sup>But <sup>12</sup>six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months.  
 48 And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the

<sup>c</sup> Josh. 8. 15.<sup>d</sup> Josh. 8. 19.<sup>e</sup> Josh. 8. 20.<sup>f</sup> Jer. 51. 33.<sup>g</sup> ch. 21. 13.

<sup>1</sup> Or, *made a long sound* with the trumpet, Josh. 6. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Or, *time*.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *with*.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *elevation*.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. *to smite the wounded*.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. *the whole consumption*.

*tion*.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. *touching them*.

<sup>8</sup> Or, *from Menuchah, &c.*

<sup>9</sup> Heb. *unto over against*.

42. *the way of the wilderness*] i.e. the wilderness which extended from Jericho to the hills of Bethel.

*them which came out of the cities*] These must be the Benjamites (r. 15). Hence, "*in the midst of them*" must mean *in their own cities*, whither they severally fled for refuge, but failed to find shelter (r. 48). Anathoth, Alemath, Ramah, Ataroth, Geba, Michmash, Ai, Bethel, Migron, &c., would probably be the cities meant, all lying east and north of Gibeah.

43. The language and construction of this verse is poetical; it seems to be an extract from a song, and to describe, in the language of poetry, the same event which the preceding verse described in that of prose.

*with ease*] Or *rest* (Num. x. 33; Ps. xcvi. 11). The expression is very obscure. The margin takes it as the name of a place.

45. *Rimmon*] A village named *Rummon*, situated on the summit of a conical chalky hill, still exists, and forms a remarkable

object in the landscape, visible in all directions. It lies 15 miles north of Jerusalem. It is a different place from Rimmon in the south of Judah (Josh. xv. 32), and Remmon in Zebulun (Josh. xix. 13). Gidom, mentioned nowhere else, was evidently close to Rimmon.

46. In r. 35 the number given is 25,100. Verses 44—46 give the details of the loss on that day: 18,000, 5,000, and 2,000; in all 25,000. But as the Benjamites numbered 26,700 men (r. 15), and 800 escaped to the rock of Rimmon, it is clear that 1,100 are unaccounted for, partly from no account being taken of those who fell in the battles of the two first days, partly from the use of round numbers, or from some other cause. The numbers given both here and in r. 35 are expressly restricted to those who fell on *that* (the third) day.

48. They treated Benjamin as devoted to utter destruction, as Jericho had been (Josh. vi. 17, 21), and the whole tribe was all but actually extirpated. We see in the punish-

men of *every* city, as the beast, and all that <sup>1</sup>came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that <sup>2</sup>they came to.

- <sup>a</sup> ch. 20. 1. **CHAP. 21.** NOW <sup>a</sup>the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to  
<sup>b</sup> ch. 20. 18, 26. 2 wife. And the people came <sup>b</sup>to the house of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept  
3 sore; and said, O LORD God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to day one tribe lacking in Israel?  
<sup>c</sup> 2 Sam. 21. 25. 4 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and <sup>c</sup>built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace  
<sup>d</sup> ch. 5. 23. 5 offerings. ¶ And the children of Israel said, Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? <sup>d</sup>For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the LORD to Mizpeh, saying, He shall  
6 surely be put to death. And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe  
7 cut off from Israel this day. How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we  
8 will not give them of our daughters to wives? ¶ And they said, What one *is there* of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD? And, behold, there came none to the  
<sup>e</sup> 1 Sam. 11. 1. & 31. 11. 9 camp from <sup>e</sup>Jabesh-gilead to the assembly. For the people were numbered, and, behold, *there were* none of the inhabitants of  
10 Jabesh-gilead there. And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying,  
<sup>f</sup> ver. 5. & ch. 5. 23. 11 Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of  
<sup>1</sup> Sam. 11. 7. 12 the sword, with the women and the children. And this *is* the thing that ye shall do, <sup>g</sup>Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and  
<sup>g</sup> Num. 31. 17. 13 every woman that <sup>h</sup>hath lain by man. And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred <sup>h</sup>young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to <sup>i</sup>Shiloh, which *is* in the land of  
<sup>h</sup> Josh. 18. 1. 14 Canaan. ¶ And the whole congregation sent *some* <sup>j</sup>to speak to the children of Benjamin <sup>j</sup>that *were* in the rock Rimmon, and to  
<sup>i</sup> ch. 20. 17. 15 <sup>k</sup>call peaceably unto them. And Benjamin came again at that

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *was found*.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *were found*.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *knoweth the lying with man*.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *young women virgins*.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. *and spake and called*.

<sup>6</sup> Or, *proclaim peace*, Deut. 20. 10.

ment inflicted the same ferocity which marked both the crime and the Levite's mode of requiring vengeance.

XXI. 2. *to the house of God*] It should be, "to Bethel." See xx. 18.

3. The repetition of the name of Israel is very striking in connexion with the title of Jehovah as *God of Israel*. It contains a very forcible pleading of the Covenant, and memorial of the promises. The very name "Israel" comprehended all the twelve tribes; with one of them blotted out, the remnant would not be Israel.

4. It is not certain whether the brazen Altar was at Bethel at this time, or whether it may not have been elsewhere, *e.g.*, at Shiloh with the Tabernacle. Some, however, think that the Altar here mentioned was *additional* to the brazen Altar, in consequence of the unusual number of sacrifices

caused by the presence of the whole congregation (cp. 1 K. viii. 64 note).

8. *Jabesh-Gilead*] Is here mentioned for the first time. (See marg. ref.) The name of Jabesh survives only in the Wady Yabes (running down to the east bank of the Jordan), near the head of which are situated the ruins called Ed-Deir, which are identified with Jabesh-Gilead.

10. *And the congregation sent 12,000 men*] A thousand from each tribe; they followed the precedent of Num. xxxi. 4.

11. *Ye shall utterly destroy*] More exactly, "Ye shall devote to utter destruction," or *cherem* (Lev. xxvii. 28 note).

12. *to Shiloh*] Whither, as the usual place of meeting for the national assembly, the Israelites had moved from Bethel (a distance of about 10 miles), during the expedition of the 12,000 to Jabesh-Gilead.

- time; and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead: and yet so they sufficed them not.
- 15 And the people <sup>k</sup>repented them for Benjamin, because that the <sup>k</sup>ver. 6.
- 16 Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. ¶ Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin.
- 17 And they said, *There must be an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel.*
- 18 Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: <sup>l</sup>for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed be he that <sup>l</sup>ver. 1.  
giveth a wife to Benjamin. Then they said, Behold, *there is a* <sup>ch. 11. 35.</sup>
- 19 feast of the Lord in Shiloh <sup>1</sup>yearly *in a place which is on the north side of Beth-el, <sup>2</sup>on the east side <sup>3</sup>of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah.*
- 20 Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying,
- 21 Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; and see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out <sup>m</sup>to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the <sup>m</sup>See  
Exod. 15. 20.  
ch. 11. 34.  
1 Sam. 18. 6.  
Jer. 31. 13.
- 22 daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, <sup>n</sup>Be favourable unto them for our sakes: because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war: for ye did not give unto them at this time, *that ye*
- 23 *should be guilty.* And the children of Benjamin did so, and took *them* wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and <sup>n</sup>repaired the cities, and dwelt in them. <sup>n</sup>See ch.  
20. 48.
- 24 And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from
- 25 thence every man to his inheritance. ¶ <sup>o</sup>In those days *there was no king in Israel: <sup>p</sup>every man did that which was right in his own eyes.* <sup>o</sup>ch. 17. 6.  
& 18. 1.  
& 19. 1.  
<sup>p</sup>Dent. 12. 8.  
ch. 17. 6.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *from year to year.*<sup>2</sup> Or, *toward the sunrise.*<sup>3</sup> Or, *on.*<sup>4</sup> Or, *gratify us in them.*

18. *for the children of Israel have sworn*] See r. 1. Cp. Saul's rash oath (1 Sam. xiv. 24), and his breach of the oath made to the Gideonites (2 Sam. xxi. 2). For the guilt of a broken oath, see Ezek. xvii. 15-20; Ex. xx. 7.

19. The Feast was probably the Passover, or one of the three great Jewish Feasts. In these unsettled times men went up to Shiloh (Seilun) only once a year (1 Sam. i. 3) instead of thrice; only the males kept the Feasts, and therefore the virgins of Shiloh would naturally be the only maidens present, and the public festival would be a likely occasion for their festive dances. It is, however, possible that some particular feast peculiar to Shiloh is meant, like the yearly sacrifice of David's family in Bethlehem (1 Sam. xx. 29).

22. *ye did not give, &c.*] i.e. they had not broken the oath mentioned in r. 1, so as to

be guilty of taking the Lord's name in vain. They did not give their daughters to Benjamin: the Benjamites had taken them by force. Such casuistry as this condemns the system of oaths, and illustrates the wisdom of our Lord's precept (Matt. v. 33-37).

23. Cp. the very similar account of the rape of the Sabine women by the Roman youths at the festival of the Consualia, as related by Livy.

25. The repetition of this characteristic phrase (cp. xvii. 6, xviii. 1, xix. 1) is probably intended to impress upon us the idea that these disorders arose from the want of a sufficient authority to suppress them. The preservation of such a story, of which the Israelites must have been ashamed, is a striking evidence of the Divine superintendence and direction as regards the Holy Scriptures.